

6
Success no Rule.

Being the First Part
Of a R E P L Y
T O *Mr. Peirce's*
Mr. PEIRCE'S DEFENCE
OF THE
DISSENTING MINISTRY
AND
PRESBYTERIAN ORDINATION.

In Vindication of a Book, Entituled, *The Rational and Moral Conduct of Mr. Peirce Examined, &c.*

By J. JACKMAN Vicar of *Leekwotton* in the County of
Warwick.

Now we desire all Christians in the fear of God to consider, that if the Lord Jesus would not honour himself to become our Mediator, till he was anointed by his Father, and designed to this Office, it cannot but be great presumption for any man to glorifie himself, and make himself a Minister, before he be lawfully Ordained thereto, &c. *Assembly of Divines, Jus Div. Minist. Evang. Par. I. Chap. 4.*

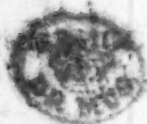
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O X F O R D

THE PREFACE.

UPON my Examination of Mr. Peirce's Sermon, *Presbyterian Ordination Prov'd Regular*, with it's Preface, two principal Heads of Debate have arisen between us. The one, concerning his Doctrine of Trying Ministries by Success, first deliver'd in his Sermon, *An Useful Ministry a Valid One*, and repeated with some Vindication in the fore-mention'd Preface. The other, concerning the Power of Presbyters to Ordain; which he endeavours to establish in the first-nam'd Sermon.

The Reader hath here a particular Reply to his Defence, so far as it relates to the former of these Heads, together with several incidental matters, whereof the Contents subjoyn'd will give an account.

It was my design to have publish'd together an entire Reply to the first Part

The Preface.

of his Defence, which contains several other incidental matters: and such an one I have ready by me. But it being swell'd to too great a bulk, and not easy to be contracted within the bounds I am not willing to exceed, I thought it better to publish this; which is the main part, by itself; leaving the rest to follow, either in whole or in part, and either separately, or joyntly, with somewhat else, as future considerations shall determine. I cannot think of suppressing it altogether: because then Mr. *Peirce* would have too much colour to complain that justice is not done him. And I would not in any point refuse him reasonable satisfaction. If he shall at any time think fit to make a Rejoinder to what is offer'd to the Publick; my request is, that he would not fail to explain himself upon those particulars, which I have remark'd as needing explanation: that so the true point in difference may plainly appear, and our Readers more easily judge of the importance of it, and of the force and pertinence of the arguments us'd on either side.

There

The Preface.

There is little occasion, I conceive, to apologize for my delay in Replying. Several accidents have contributed to it. But indeed, I have not thought hast requisite. And the Publick, it may be, will give me the more favourable hearing, when allow'd a convenient interval between my importunities. Nor do I affect the reputation of a quick Writer, or desire to compare with Mr. *Peirce* in that respect. I am content with the advantages, which a better Cause and more care give me. Nor do I think a needless hast, will excuse faults. However, what I now publish hath long wanted only transcribing, and so had appear'd much sooner, if it had been intended to appear alone.

Our way hitherto hath been to follow one another step by step. The same is here taken. And the advantage of it is, that it renders the justice or injustice done to the adversary easiest to be observ'd. But that course growing now too tedious, and advancing apace to be voluminous, as well as looking confus'd, it will be necessary in the Reply which, with

The Preface.

with God's leave, I design to the Second Part of Mr. *Peirce's* Defence, to proceed by another method. Wherein I shall take the liberty to pass by what is not material, and of the rest to consider the effect or substance of the meaning without regarding the form of expression, if not proper or not concise, and shall endeavour to reduce every thing into that order, which is most agreeable to reason, and most conducive to brevity and perspicuity. And notwithstanding that great experience in the Controversy, which he pretends to, and I shall not dispute, I hope to make it appear, that the side he hath taken hath such a defect, as all his skill cannot supply.

Then we are to enquire, who have Power to Ordain. In the mean time we are to consider an attempt, that would render that enquiry in a great measure useless or needless, by establishing a Rule for Trying the Pretensions of Ministries, the whole business of Ordination being wav'd. How Mr. *Peirce* hath succeeded in that attempt is the main question under present Examination.

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THE CONTENTS.

- Sect. I. **O***F the occasion and title of my Remarks. Of Dissenting Writers. Of Animosities, Contumelies and Riots.* Pag. 1.
- Sect. II. *Of the controversy about Ordination, and the way of managing it between Episcoparians and Dissenters.* P. 7.
- Sect. III. *Of the Design and tendency of Mr. P.'s Sermon, An Useful Ministry a Valid One. Of the notion of a Regular or Irregular Ministry, and the regard due to Regularity. As also of the suppos'd intricacy of the business of Ordination.* p. 10.
- Sect. IV. *Of Matt. 7. 15, &c. how to be understood. Of false prophets. Of their fruits. Of the word Beware. Of the defectiveness of Mr. P.'s interpretation. Of his following our Saviour's example, by his Rule of Success.* p. 16.
- Sect. V. *Of his hard censure of one part of the Clergy, as in application of our Saviour's Rule Matt. 7. 15, &c. And of what by taking the same liberty might be retaliated.* p. 30.
- Sect. VI. *Of his way, which I call'd uncouth, of explaining the nature of the Success he argues from. And of his short answer to one sort of objections.* P. 33.
- Sect. VII. *Of 2 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3. the main foundation of Mr. P.'s Rule of Success. The extraordinary as well as ordinary operations of the Spirit there refer'd to. The contrary supposition unreasonable.* P. 35.
- Sect. VIII. *Of the insufficiency of Mr. P.'s Rule, by reason of that Success, which God out of some regards of his Goodness may give to Ministers not duly Call'd. Of Mr. P.'s comparison of the success of Episcopal and Dissenting Ministers here in England. Of the notion of a due Call. Of Mr. P.'s supposing the Essence of Ordination retain'd.* P. 44.
Sect.

The Contents.

- Sect. IX. *Of the want of requisite certainty in the mark which Mr. P.'s Rule proposes : and, first, an account of the undiscernibleness of Christ form'd in men, or of the inward regeneration, or Christian integrity, of our Neighbours.* p. 52
- Sect. X. *Of the like want of certainty, secondly, on account of the imperceptibility of the Steps taken by the H. Spirit in the inward work of our sanctification.* p. 60
- Sect. XI. *Of Mr. P.'s notion of the Success he argues from whether it be distinctly settled.* p. 64
- Sect. XII. *Of success as made an argument for the Validity of a Ministry. What Validity a Ministry not duly call'd may or may not have. None to be depended on.* p. 69
- Sect. XIII. *Of Mr. P.'s Sermon, An Useful Ministry &c. how far examin'd. Of the uncertainty of his Meaning still remaining : particularly, as to the regard he would have preserv'd to Ordination in the use of his Rule, or how it would be preserv'd. The subject of trying Ministries by Success concluded.* p. 78

A Reply to Mr. PEIRCE.

SECTION I.

MR. P. in the beginning of his Defence against my Remarks is pleas'd to suppose, that his Adversaries did not think such an Answer to his Sermon about Ordination sufficient, as is contain'd in *The Invalidity of the Dissenting Ministry &c.* and therefore oblig'd the world (as his phrase is) with another.

But that learned Author (to me unknown) and the world too, will, I hope, rather believe that sincere account, which I gave in my Preface, of the occasion both of my composing and publishing those Remarks, which were in a manner finish'd, before his Book came out.

The Title which I gave my Remarks, so displeasing to Mr. P. was chosen by me on no other account, than the better to express the nature of them; without the least intention to give any man *a notion of some grievous immorality I had discover'd in his private conversation.* My Conscience is perfectly clear in this point, and bears me witness that I scorn all such base and pitiful artifices. And as my Title-page did not imply, but, taken altogether, rather excluded any reference to his private conversation; so in my Preface I took particular care to obviate any suspicion that I meddled with it: declaring expressly against it, and *that my reprehensions were founded wholly on what he had made publick, and that by me specified.* I express'd my desire too (which was unfeigned) *that none of my Readers would admit of any impressions to his disadvantage, without well considering how they are grounded.* So careful was I to secure Mr. P. from any wrong, as well as not directly to do him any. But to proceed,

I never blam'd the Dissenters barely for *vindicating themselves*

selves by the Press. But they ought to do it in a modest and even respectful way. Reproachful reflections on the Church and her Friends, if not chargeable with falshood, are not therefore justifiable. Far from it: unless I have been strangely mistaken all along, as to the respect which is due to the Establishments of Authority and the Interests of Peace, and as to the meaning of those unlimited prohibitions of speaking evil of, or judging, one another, which we meet with in the Sacred Records of our Religion.

And therefore I cannot but admire to see Mr. P. (*Def. p. 14.*) presuming that if they (the Dissenters) *clear themselves of making false and undeserv'd reflections, no one will blame them for the other.* But why not? Is the Christian Law of meekness expir'd? Or, Have Dissenters obtain'd an Exemption from it? Or, Is the regard to it dropt by consent on all sides? For my part, as I never came into any such compact, and have some kindness still for that despis'd virtue, I shall make bold to remark now and then such open transgressions of it, as shall come in my way.

Yet, as I shall not oblige my self to take notice of every thing that occurs of that kind; so shall I not undertake to vindicate all the Clergy from personal faults, and much less to refute all his general and indeterminate accusations. Doubtless, we are, none of us, without failings, and some of us not without greater faults: but judicious and equal Readers will not think the worse of our Body barely upon the evil report of so keen an adversary, or the better of his Cause, for his so frequently supposing (as he seems by his practice) that the Vindication of it leads him fairly to scandal. And I hope, and have some special reason to believe, that many of his own Brethren disapprove of his Conduct in this regard: as, surely, all must, who are hearty friends to peace and concord, and not so vain as to expect those blessings from an entire suppression of the Episcopal Party.

As to the Air of Grandeur, which I mention'd as having been observ'd of late in Writings of the Dissenters (which may probably be owing to the particular temper of the Writers, as being some of the warmest and most forward
Men

Men of the Party) this Air, I say, discovers it self chiefly in their disdainful treatment of their Adversaries ; their bold Censures, not only of the Church, her Clergy and Friends, but even of the Laws of the Land; the Consideration they seem to challenge of the Government for their services and sufferings ; and (however Mr. P. may gain-say) their over-bearing way of positive assertions, inevitable and unprov'd. And whether a great deal of this Air doth not appear in the late Writings of Mr. P. and particularly in this his Defence, the world may judge. I pretend no right on our side to this manner of writing, which is universally blameable : and yet 'tis really less excusable in those that write against the National Establishment, than in those that plead for it. A modest manner, though commendable in all, is peculiarly requisite in the former : nor would it be any argument of their not being satisfied of the justice of their cause ; unless in the opinion of such whose judgment is not much to be valued. Wise men know, that they who write with most confidence, reflection and bluster, generally depend least on the goodness of their cause, and the strength of their reasoning.

Mr. P. tells us (Def. p. 15.) that *they reckon this their day no otherwise, than 'tis every honest Briton's.* But I think 'tis manifest, that they have behav'd themselves, as if they thought it more peculiarly their's. There hath been no time (since the Revolution, at least) in which they have not had liberty to speak for themselves : but of late they have seem'd to think, this is their time to insult all that oppose them, in defence of the Church, and of the Laws by which it is establish'd and secur'd ; and that they are to expect greater favours now, than they have yet met with in the times most favourable to them, since the Period aforesaid. I will be bold to say, they ought not to reckon such their high carriage among the services they have done to the Government.

Mr. P. doth not know (he says *ibid.*) of any mean and dissingenuous arts they stoop to. Now, such I reckon the art of making advantage by obscuring or misrepresenting the state of the question ; the art of captivating men's understandings

derstandings by raising passions and prejudices; the art of perswading people by dint of confidence, and well-sounding words and phrases, that have no clear and distinct signification; the art of recommending a cause by uncharitable or contemptuous treatment of the adverse Writer; with others the like. And such arts have Dissenting Writers been observ'd to deal much in. There are two of them more especially eminent in controversy. To one of whom the now Bishop of *Bangor*, had occasion to give a *serious Admonition* on account of such practices as aforesaid; which proving fruitless he was at length tir'd out by them: as we find by the last paragraph of the Postscript annex'd to his *Brief Defence of Episcopal Ordination*. And many the like complaints Mr. *Olyffe* made of the same adversary. And yet both these Church-Writers manifested a great tenderness for the Dissenters, and might, if any, have expected a return of more candid and ingenuous dealing.

The other eminent Dissenting Writer is Mr. *P.* himself; whose arts in writing I shall leave to the Readers judgment: and whether he or I more scorn such as are truly mean and disingenuous, the effects may discover.

In the mean time, I know (contrary to his insinuation *ibid.*) that I have not advanc'd or suggested any thing in my Preface or Book with a *design to delude poor unthinking people*, or which appear'd to me delusive. Nor do I yet see any thing of that nature in that sentence of mine, which affirms, *that the fact is but too plain in the generality of the Dissenters Books and Pamphlets* [Controversial,] *that the Writers chuse rather to exasperate by contumelious and even contemptuous treatment, than to invite us by a modest and Christian-like behaviour to a calm and serious debate of the points in controversy with them; as if they had ends best to be serv'd by keeping up and promoting heats and animosities.*

But Mr. *P.* makes very strange of this, and says, "Good Sir, what ends can you suppose we have to serve by heats and animosities? Def. p. 16. As if the forward Men among the Dissenters might not propose greater advantages to their party in troublous than in quiet times. As if they might

might not think that the more distracted the Nation is, the more considerable their party shall appear ; and that the more uneasy the Government is, the more they shall be courted and encourag'd, who are so eminently loyal and affectionate to it, and who in such circumstances may fancy themselves of considerable use to a Ministry.

I do not suppose *they have the Interest of a Popish Pretender at heart* ; but, in zeal to serve their own ends, they may do what hath some tendency to serve that interest, and depend upon the manifold strength of the Government to secure it-self. He needed not to have mention'd, *what they have suffer'd already by the heats and animosities, which have been in the Nation*, as an argument, that they cannot desire their continuance. For have they not upon the whole been considerable gainers by them ? Have they not receiv'd an ample recompence for their losses ? Have they not obtain'd a vigorous Act of Parliament for their future security ? Have they not had the address to make their sufferings appear as sufferings for their Loyalty ? Have they not thereby recommended themselves to the Government ? And have they not thro' that occasion seen many marks of it's displeasure upon such as were, or were counted, their enemies ? And so secure as now they are from the like sufferings, they may the more easily be suppos'd willing for some ends to keep up heats and animosities ; when we see their behaviour such as manifestly tends that way. And yet I did not say, that the Dissenting Writers spoken of had ends to serve by that means, but only that their manner was such as if they had. How far it might be owing to inconsiderate heat and resentment I did not determine.

With what limitation we are to understand the word [*We*] when Mr. P. says (ibid.) *We had not the least hand in raising* the heats and animosities that have been, I know not. But sure we are not to be perswaded, that the behaviour of all his party was modest and inoffensive from the Death of the Queen to the time of the Mobbs ; that it was not usual for any of them (especially after the Changes that ensued upon the King's arrival) to make rude reflections
on

on her late Majesty, to irritate their Neighbours by reproaching such as were most esteem'd and belov'd by them, to insult Clergy-men and others whom they counted Tories or High-Church-men, to boast that they had now a King of their own (while his Majesty, no doubt, intended to be a common Father to his people) and to threaten whom they did not like with what was to be expected under him. Such insolent and provoking behaviour of Dissenters contributed to that Revival of Heats and Animosities, which put an end to the happy Calm this Nation enjoy'd for a time after her late Majesty's Decease, and was in part, at least, the occasion of the Riots so much complain'd of: to which also some more immediate provocations were given in most places, either by Dissenters themselves, or by such as were thought (wrongfully, perhaps) no less enemies to the Church than they. Not that the provocations given do by any means justify the violencees that were used: but they were such as might very well have been let alone, and which so manifestly tended to the exciting of Riots, considering the then disposition of the people, that they who gave them could not in reason but expect Riots would (if they did not expressly intend they should) follow. Nor do I say this upon common report only, but upon very credible information, after the best enquiry I could make.

I am far from pretending to vindicate what the Mobbs have done. But as to the comparison which Mr. P. makes between the severity of their actions, and that of the words of Dissenters, I believe the latter have been as severe in their kind as the former. And we can apprehend no more, from our worst enemies, than severity of words, till they can and dare proceed to that of actions. In the mean time I observe, that reputation, that of Clergy men, especially, is a thing not lightly to be regarded, and in case of damage is not so easy to be repair'd as a Meeting-house. And to represent a great part of them as vile, wicked, persons, disaffected and dangerous to the Government, and the proper objects of infamy and reproach, is an attempt of as severe a nature as can easily be imagin'd.

As when Mr. P. tells the world (*ibid.*) *that the Clergy have, many of them, been at the bottom of all the barbarous usage they [the Dissenters] have met with; that the only danger the Nation is in arises chiefly from them; and that the exposing them as they deserve is an eminent service to the publick, and very consistent with moderation and peaceableness.* Are these the words of a man, who is not for keeping up heats and animosities? Do they favour more of moderation and peaceableness, or of passion and rancour? Are they consistent with charity, or with truth? To blacken the Clergy at this rate, is it not of the utmost disservice to Religion? And what service can it be to a Government, which desires not to be establish'd, by the methods of cruelty and terrour, but in and by the united affections of the people? I shall leave these things to be consider'd by men of judgment and conscience; and shall only add, that whereas *the barbarous usage* which he speaks of must include, if not principally signify, what was done in the late Riots, I could never yet find, there was any ground for so scandalous an accusation of many, or any, of the Clergy, as that they were at the bottom of that.

On the contrary, I am well assur'd, that as the provoking behaviour of Dissenters, or of the party they are suppos'd in league with, was in a great measure the occasion of the Riots that were; so that Dissenters (as well as some others) have often us'd the most probable means to provoke Churchmen to commit Riots or other disorders, when the attempt did not succeed. And yet I do not lay these things at the door of their Teachers; as neither can I excuse them all.

SECT. II.

Mr. P. proceeds p. 17. to answer my first Chapter, and begins with explaining a Sentence, which I could not understand, and which he seems to allow did need explanation. He hath not yet express'd his meaning very clearly, but I take it to be this, *That if in any place no Minister Episcopally Ordain'd be to be had, but who is notoriously vicious,*

vicious, yet *Episcoparians* hold it unlawful for the people in *Ha* such a place to esteem of any other as *Christ's Minister*, and on attend upon him as such. This then is what he calls *mak- po ing a mighty stir about Ordination*: though it be no more no than what every one makes, who holds, that people ought po either to content themselves with an ordain'd Minister that rea is notoriously vicious, or to do as well as they can with the out any one to act as a proper Minister among them, rather the than to accept a person unordain'd as such. Which if it be the an error, it is not I conceive, peculiar to *Episcoparians*, nor spu what people should be taught to look upon as matter of ny reproach in any. wa

As for the discipline which the 26 art. of our Church ver speaks of, if that be any where with us *notoriously neglect- ter ed*, it must in all probability be owing to the people them- be selves, in omitting their part towards the exercise of it app And if men will betake themselves to a pretended Mini- op stry unordain'd, or to any other irregular course, rather sel than be at some trouble to get a grievance redress'd in an Mr orderly way, they are, certainly, not to be justified therein by

I had said, that the way which we take of managing the in controversy about Ordination, is indeed the nearest and is the surest we can find to the discovery of the truth; and pro that we chuse it not, but because the circumstances of the inf case oblige us to it: whereas Mr. P. had suggested, it might eith be done with a design to puzzle the common people rather I than inform them. Now says he, Def. p. 18. "This I take tur "to be ingenuous, and an owning they would not have such is p "recourse to Fathers and Councils, were they not constrain'd we "to it from the insufficiency of any Scripture-proof, which Bu "they can bring for their opinion. It seems by this passage the "that there is somewhat which must be maintain'd for cer- sea "tain reasons as truth, and since it cannot be done by Scri- to l "pture, some other way must be found out to do it. And all this I take to be more artful than ingenuous. The way rec that we take to be satisfied in what hands the power of Or- ue dination was lodg'd by Christ and his Apostles, is to com- ea pare what we find in Scripture relating to that matter be with the practice and testimony of subsequent Antiquity. lar

Had the Scripture it-self so plainly determin'd the question, as to leave no colour for any diversity of opinions about it, it had, I confess been needless, though, perhaps, not altogether useless, to enquire any further. But that being not the case, I cannot imagine any other way more reasonable, or more proper to clear up the matter, than with the aforesaid, which we take : and which is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, always leading men, when it be the meaning of an old written Rule or Law admits of dispute, to have recourse to the earliest subsequent testimony and practice, for the explanation thereof. And this way is the more certain, when (as in the present controversy) the true meaning of the written Rule might be determin'd by such facts, as in the times enquir'd into must be notorious. And what upon such a rational procedure of it appears to be truth, it is fit we should maintain against opposers, and that by the same arguments, by which our selves are most fully convinc'd. So that I see no cause in an Mr. P. had upon this occasion to suggest, that we are led by indirect considerations, either to maintain what we do in this point, or in the way that we do : which after all, is not near so puzzling as that of our adversaries ; who proceed wholly by such uncertain interpretations of, and the inferences from Scripture, as may commonly be pleaded on either side of a question.

In his next Paragraph, he gives me a fair occasion to return his complement of ingenuity. For there he owns it *such is prudent in them to keep their people from regarding what we bring from Fathers and Councils.* That is ingenuous. But for his opinion, *that it were no less prudent in us to do the like,* the case, methinks, is so different, that I must beg leave to dissent. And sure he is unreasonable in desiring to have it acknowledg'd, *that they are of no significance at all to recommend such things to Christians, as are no where recommended in their Bibles.* I cannot but have some value for their recommendation in things, which our Bibles leave indifferent, though I do not think my self bound to be always determin'd thereby. I grant that it may be dangerous to have an undue esteem of the significance of

what is to be found in them. I look not upon the Canon called Apostolical, or any the Canons or Customs of the Ancient Church, as such, to be universally and perpetually binding. I make not Fathers or Councils the necessary Rule of my Faith or Practice. But yet I think their testimony regardable; in plain matters of fact especially wherein they could not easily be mistaken. And these things are very consistent.

Nor doth that Paragraph need any further answer. Unless it be proper to take notice, that though it hath been said (as Mr. *P.* observes) that the learned and pious Dr. *Grabe* never communicated with the Church of *England* in the Lord's Supper, I have it from unquestionable Authority that it is not true. He did indeed think our Liturgy defective in that administration, but the defect supplyable by the officiating Minister.

SECT. III.

And now I come to what Mr. *P.* advances in Defence of his way of success for trying the Pretences of Episcopal and Dissenting Ministers. The examination of which is the main business at present.

And here I am little concern'd with the account he gives Def. p. 19, 20. of the occasion and design of his Sermon on that subject, and the approbation it met with from Bp. *Burton* and other *Low-Church-men*, as he calls them. But I am surpriz'd to be told, that he design'd to promote Charity thereby, between Episcopalians and Dissenters, and especially in the former towards the latter. If indeed to set people of different parties upon strictly examining into and judging of one another's lives and conversations, and their respective Ministries thereby, be the way to promote mutual love; And, if to form a comparison between his own party and the Episcopalians, and therein to extol the virtue and piety of the former, and to load the latter both Ministers and people, with severe and plentiful reproaches; If this, I say, be the way to win upon the latter, and to bring them into good humour with such me-

non-est and civil adversaries : it must be confess'd, that Mr. P. took the proper method in that Sermon to effect those purposes.

But according to my notion of the usual workings of their human passions, had his design been to prejudice such of the Church-people against their Ministers, as were apt to receive impressions of that nature, to provoke and exasperate the rest against Dissenters, to set people upon quarrelling about who are wicked and who are godly, and been particularly to encourage Dissenters to look upon themselves as the Godly, and to censure, despise and revile their Neighbours, as Wicked, his management had been much more conformable to such his intention, than it was to that of promoting Charity. And supposing he did design to promote Charity in the Dissenters towards virtuous and pious Episcopal Ministers (for proof of which mighty favour he refers us to p. 35, 36. of the Sermon) we are little beholden to him for that, when he instructs them in the same discourse to look upon the generality of us under another character, and in the very place referr'd to, shews the narrowness of his intention.

Bp. Burnet, and some others of the Clergy, might, for what I know, commend the Sermon in some respect or other, but that any of them commended the Charity, or approved of the main Doctrine of it, I cannot believe without an express Testimony that shall be home to the point. But to proceed,

About his Doctrine of trying Ministers by their success, there are two Questions, *What he means by it*, and, *Whether it be true and sound*. And I am afraid we shall have a good deal of difficulty yet to obtain a clear resolution of the former.

He call'd it *a way of trying the Pretences of Episcopal and Dissenting Ministers*. I ask'd what pretences? And having observ'd from his own words, that they could not be their pretences to Regularity, I express'd my thoughts, that his short way (for as such he recommended it) was too short. *For certainly* (said I) *people are bound to have regard to Regularity in their choice of a ministry, and ne-*

ver without necessity to acquiesce under one, which they have cause to doubt is irregular. In reciting which passage Def. p. 20. where he formally quotes it, he leaves out the words [without necessity]; which, if done by design, is not altogether fair, tho' he restore them in the next page, where part of the same passage is not quoted, but occasionally repeated.

But to pass by that, I find we are not agreed in our notions of a regular or irregular Ministry. *The regularity and irregularity of a Ministry, which we now talk of* (says he *ibid.*) *relates wholly to the entrance of persons upon the Ministry, that is, to their Ordination*: and by the sequel it appears that he refers it to what is extra-essential, as well as what is essential in Ordination. But I us'd the word [Regularity] in that which I still take to be the proper acceptance of it in this case; understanding that Ministry to be regular, which is allow'd of, and that to be irregular, which is not allow'd of, by the ordinary Rule, or that which ought to be observ'd, at least, in all ordinary cases. And so a Ministry may be irregular, either as a Ministry in the general, or as exercis'd under such or such circumstances. In the former respect that Ministry is irregular, which hath not such a Call or Mission to the Office in general, as by the ordinary Rule is necessary. In the latter respect that Ministry is irregular, which is exercis'd in such circumstances, wherein the ordinary Rule doth not allow it to be exercis'd; as *v. g.* in opposition to a lawful sentence of suspension or deprivation, or in a Schismatical way. And in both these respects it holds true, that people ought not without necessity to acquiesce under an irregular Ministry: tho' the former sort of irregularity was, I confess, principally in my view. And therefore what I chiefly meant was, *That people ought not without necessity to acquiesce under a Ministry, which they have cause to doubt is irregular, as wanting that Ordination, or designation to the Office in general, which by the ordinary Rule is necessary, or which alone according to that Rule is sufficient.* And accordingly is that to be understood, which I added, *that what validity soever there may be in an irregular Ministry,*

it can never be valid to the grand interests of those, who will-
 fully, or through affected ignorance, chuse it before that
 which is regular. If this be not so, Regularity in this mat-
 ter is but an empty name &c. All which, I conceive, is
 very plain, as by me intended, and not attempted in this
 place to be disprov'd by Mr. P.

That which he seems to argue against is what I never
 said, viz. That people ought never without necessity to
 acquiesce under a Ministry, which they have cause to doubt
 was not regularly ordain'd in every circumstance, whe-
 ther essential or not, or, more particularly, which was
 ordain'd without imposition of hands.

And so having no occasion at present to enquire, whe-
 ther imposition of hands be, or what else is or is not essen-
 tial to Ordination, I may here fairly take leave of this Para-
 graph, which begins p. 20. and ends p. 22. of his Defence.
 Which by the by is so oddly put together, that Mr. P.
 having rightly said at first, that Episcoparians and Dissen-
 ters differ, in the matter of Ordination, about, Who have
 authority to convey the Office, he seems afterwards to sup-
 pose, that we differ about nothing but the Ceremony of
 imposition of hands: tho' I take it to be impossible that
 that should be his meaning.

Upon the words with which Mr. P. had introduc'd our
 Saviour's example *Matt. 7. 15, &c.* I had this Remark,
Who can understand any other by this, than that his inten-
tion was to teach men to judge of, and consequently chuse,
a Ministry, without any regard to Ordination, or therefore
to Regularity? To which he now answers (Def. p. 23.)
'Tis true, I recommended it as a sufficient Rule, by which
we may judge, whether a Ministry be valid, and consequent-
ly such as we may safely attend; and I think our Saviour
does the same. Where I would beg leave to ask what
 he means by [it] when he says [*I recommended it*], which
 I am doubtful of, not so much because, I don't see what
 [it] can refer to, according to Grammatical construction
 for, if that were all, I should without scruple suppose he
 meant *Success*) but because by his adding that our Savi-
 our, as he thinks, does the same (viz. *Matt. 7. 15, &c.*)

it seems that he cannot mean success ; it not being, I presume, his purpose to deliver his opinion, that our Saviour in the place refer'd to, recommends success as a Rule to judge by.

In the next place, he purges himself from *counting Regularity a trifle*, which I did not charge him with. Upon what supposition I said, *Regularity would be an empty name* ; and what sort of Regularity I spoke of, the Reader hath seen.

He subjoyns, "*And this Rule is the rather to be here apply'd, because the contests about the business of Ordination have made that an intricate matter. And since our Lord unquestionably foresaw the strife there would be about the name of Episcopacy, which Clemens R. Ep. i. c. 44. tells us the Apostles were inform'd of from Christ, why may he not be thought to design here to give a shorter rule for men to judge by?*" His drift, I suppose, is to argue, that since our Lord foresaw the strife mention'd (which we should not have doubted of without the testimony of *Clemens R.*) 'tis not improbable he should give a shorter Rule for men to go by in judging of Ministries, than to trouble themselves about the intricate business of Ordination. But I might better argue, that our Lord knowing what contention and confusion must naturally follow, if people were allow'd to judge of and chuse Ministries, without regard to orderly appointment, would not probably give any Rule that should supersede that regard. And *Clemens* in telling us *ibid.* what the Apostles did in pursuance of that information which Christ gave them, doth not say, that they instructed the People in any such Rule, as had no reference to regular Mission (as sure they would have done if our Saviour had seen that to be the proper expedient in the case) but that they appointed some to the Ministry themselves, and settled an order (the Father's words must amount to that effect) for others to succeed them. Their practice there related shews, that they thought a settled course for the constitution of Ministers to be the most proper way for preventing of contention : as undoubtedly it is. And that our Saviour, for peace's sake,

should

should prompt men to a disregard of Regularity, is one of the most improbable things in the world.

Our contests, or endless wrangles (as Mr. P. speaks Def. p. 20.) about the conveyance of the ministerial Office may be accounted for from the like bias of interests and prejudices to that which renders many other controversies endless, which otherwise, probably, would be soon determin'd in a general agreement. Nor, I conceive, have our contests yet, nor ever can they, make the business of Ordination so intricate, but that honest and unprejudic'd minds may as easily understand, which side of the question is practically to be preferr'd, as, which day of the week is to be kept holy to the Lord, or, as many other points of moment to practice.

Mr. P. tells us (Def. p. 23.) *that he sees no cause hitherto to retract any thing that he hath said.* Which seems to refer to my observing p. 4. and again p. 5. of my Remarks, that he had not retracted any part of the former Sermon, tho' perhaps he had talk'd inconsistently with it, or (as I speak more particularly p. 6.) *tho' there are some passages in the latter Sermon, expressing or plainly implying, that men ought to keep to a regular Ministry, and particularly to the Ministry of such as are in his notion regularly ordain'd, no necessity compelling to the contrary.* Where I meant regularly as to essentials: it having never been my own thought, that people were bound to pay so strict a regard to the regularity of other circumstances. Now whether there are any expressions in the latter Sermon expressing or implying such a regard (as I pretend) due to Ordination, or how that regard may be reconcil'd with the passages by me quoted (p. 4, 5, 6. of my Remarks) out of the former Sermon, as repugnant to it (*viz.* as making success a sufficient Rule to go by, without regard to Ordination) he doth not say; but only, *that he sees no cause to retract any thing.* To me he seems industriously to avoid explaining himself fully upon this head, and indeed to talk inconsistently still about it, as shall be particulariz'd in it's proper place. I shall only add here, that the passages of the latter Sermon referr'd to are to be found p. 29, 30, 31. of it.

Note,

Note, that by the former Sermon, I mean that entitul'd *No*
An Useful Ministry a Valid One, and by the latter, *Pres*
byterian Ordination prov'd Regular.

S E C T. IV.

I proceed now with Mr. P. to re-examine the case of our
 Saviour's example, *Matt. 7. 15, &c.* Our Saviour's words
 are, *Beware of false Prophets, which come to you in sheep's*
cloathing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall
know them by their fruits, &c. Now, what we are to con-
 sider is, how far the Rule here given by our Saviour will
 justify Mr. P. in recommending his Rule of success, in the
 manner he doth: which we cannot judge of without en-
 quiring into our Saviour's meaning.

In reference to which I remark'd, that Mr. P. inter-
 preted *false prophets* by *false teachers* without any scruple;
 but for no other reason that I could see, than because it
 made best for his purpose. I did not mean, that I could
 see no other reason barely for his so interpreting *false pro-*
phets, but for his doing it *without any scruple*: which was,
 as if the word were capable of no other interpretation, or,
 at least, as if that were unquestionably the right; when
 indeed there is another both more obvious, and for any
 thing that I could see, or can yet, upon the maturest con-
 sideration, much more likely. When Dr. *Hammond* in
 his Paraphrase interprets *false prophets* by *false teachers*, we
 are to suppose he delivers his judgment, whether as cer-
 tain, or only as probable: but had he been, like Mr. P. to
 have drawn an argument in his own defence upon any oc-
 casion from that Text so interpreted, I can hardly think
 he would, like him, without any more ado have taken that
 interpretation for granted.

After Dr. *Hammond*, Mr. P. refers us to Dr. *Whitby*,
 and by a strange unhappiness tells us, *that he pleads for this*
interpretation in his notes on the place: when the truth is,
 that he is against it, and pleads for my interpretation of
false prophets in those very Notes; as any one may see that
 will peruse them; especially comparing with them his
 Notes

Notes on *Luke* 1. 67. Indeed in his Notes on *Tit.* 3. 2. he says, that Hereticks are often *fly'd, false prophets, false Christs, false Apostles, false teachers, deceitful workers &c.* Where his drift is manifestly to observe, that some wilful deceit, or other wickedness (and not simple error only) is wont to be attributed to Hereticks in Scripture. And it were very unreasonable to imagine, that he reckon'd every one of those denominations to belong to all sorts of Hereticks, but some to one sort, and some to another, and some to all: and so the title of false prophets, and several others belong'd to those Hereticks, who falsely pretended to Divine Inspiration or the Gift of prophecy: which, probably, was the common, if not the universal case of the Hereticks in the Apostles days.

Grotius indeed, and other Commentators agree with *Dr. Hammond* in this case. But if they have produc'd any convincing reasons for such their Exposition, we may suppose that *Mr. P.* hath produc'd them in the sequel; and then they shall be consider'd. Himself, I dare say, would not be sway'd against his own reason by their authorities.

In the next place *Mr. P.* argues, *that if they who improv'd the Doctrines of Christianity to edification &c. were true prophets in a Gospel-sense* [for which he quotes the Author of *The Invalidity &c.*] 'tis but natural to suppose, *that they who pretended to it, and did not do it, were false prophets in a Gospel-sense.* But that Author will pardon me, I doubt not, that I am not in this case determin'd by his authority; it by no means appearing, as I conceive, that any persons not inspir'd are true prophets in the *Gospel-sense.* What *Dr. Whitby* hath said in his Notes on several occasions, especially in those on *Luke* 1. 67. hath in my judgment sufficiently overthrown that notion; which too many, I humbly conceive, have unwarily borrow'd from great Names: all whom *Mr. P.* may allow to be balanc'd by the Assembly of Divines, who in their *Jus Div. Minist. Evang. Par. 1. Chap. 6.* say, *that the prophets mention'd throughout the New Testament, seem not only to be Officers in the Church, but extraordinary Officers immediately*

mediatly inspir'd and sent by the H. Ghost. And this they confirm both by reasons and authorities.

But Mr. P. goes on, and says, Def. p. 24. "*If the Apostle calls an heathen poet a prophet Tit. i. 12. I think we need not wonder, if this title is to be understood, as given by our Lord to ordinary Teachers.*" And so he refers us to Dr. Hammond on *Tit. i. 12.* and *Luk. i. 67.* And I might refer him to Dr. Whitby on the same Texts for a full answer. But for the sake of other Readers I shall not leave the matter so. The Apostle, then, quoting a verse of *Epimenides* introduces it thus *Tit. i. 12. One of themselves a prophet of their own said &c.* Now 'tis unreasonable to suppose, that St. Paul styles that Poet a Prophet as being really one, but only as being reputed and respected as such (q. d. *One of their own countrymen, and who was look'd upon as a Prophet among them*) in like manner as the objects of heathenish worship are commonly call'd Gods in Scripture, as being reputed and worshipp'd as such. And if we enquire further in what notion of a Prophet *Epimenides* was so reputed, we shall find no reason to doubt but that it included inspiration. The Poets in general of his antiquity were look'd upon (at least, in after-times) as inspir'd; and there is particular evidence, that he had that reputation: as may be abundantly seen both in Dr. Whitby and Dr. Hammond on this place. I shall only mention Cicero's testimony *De Divin. l. 2.* where *Epimenides* the Cretan is reckon'd not only among Prophets or Diviners, but among such of them as proceeded by no rules of Art, such as foresaw things future, not by prudence, or conjecture, or observation of signs, but by a certain concitation of mind, or inward impulse. And St. Paul's calling one a Prophet, who was in such a sense a reputed Prophet, 'tis plain, is no reason at all for supposing, that ordinary Teachers come under that appellation in Scripture.

Hitherto we have seen very little reason for Mr. P.'s interpretation of the *false Prophets* Matt. 7. 15. by *false Teachers* in the general. He proceeds now more directly to attack mine, who understand by them (as I express'd myself Rem. p. 7.) *such as falsely pretend to a special or extraordinary*

they extraordinary mission from God. But this interpretation Mr. P. says (*ibid.*) will not suit the place : and if I distinguish right, he gives two reasons for it.

The first is, because our Saviour must be understood to speak of such as should prophecy in his name; and it may be doubted, whether there were any that came, at least soon after Christ's time, and in his name falsely pretended to be Prophets by an extraordinary mission. That they, our Saviour speaks of, cannot be such, as did not pretend to the name of Christ, is evident, he says, from the account given of them v. 21, 22. of the same chapter. Whereas it is far from being evident, that there is any account given at all in those verses of the false Prophets spoken of before. There is no word or particle v. 21. denoting any reference to what goes before ; nor doth the sense need any to be suppos'd. And 'tis obvious to observe throughout the Sermon on the Mount (of which the words before us are a part) that our Saviour, having many things to speak of, never dwells long on any one head, and commonly makes his transitions without form. To say a thing is evident upon grounds so manifestly insufficient, upon a supposition so very precarious ; what is it but to run men down with positive and bold assertions ? Or, how is it consistent with a due regard to the duties of veracity ? For my part I cannot see.

Yet I have no need to deny, that the false Prophets our Saviour speaks of must be pretended Christians. For what reason is there to think there were none soon after Christ's time, who calling themselves after his name, falsely pretended to Divine inspiration. When the gift of prophecy was so common among Christians, was it not very probable that some would pretend to it, who had it not ? Was there not a gift of discerning of Spirits in those days ? And is it not likely that one end at least, of that was to detect false pretenders to the gift of prophecy in Christ's Church ? Do we not read *Rev. 2. 2.* of such having been in the Church of *Ephesus*, as said *they were Apostles, and were not, and were found liars*, and consequently false Prophets ? And do not the most ancient Ecclesiastical Records inform us, that *Simon Magus, Cerinthus*, and other some in the time

of the Apostles, and some soon after, falsely pretended to Divine Inspirations, at the same time that they pretended to be Christians? I know not how far some may carry their doubts: but it is, surely, past all reasonable doubt, that there were some who under the name of Christians were *false Prophets*, in the sense by me given, soon after Christ's time. And so there is not any the least strength in Mr. P.'s first reason against my interpretation of the *false Prophets* Matt. 7. 15.

His second is taken from 2 Pet. 2. 1. *But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you.* To apply which to his purpose, he is forc'd to suppose, that the *Seducers* (i. e. the false Prophets) our Saviour means must certainly be such as were to arise in the Christian Church: which being said without any real proof, this his second reason against my interpretation doth consequently need a better support in that respect. But let us be generous, and suppose with him, as we did before, that the false Prophets our Saviour means were to arise out of the Christian Church. Then Mr. P. says, "*we may well think they are the same which St. Peter speaks of under the name of false Teachers; and that he designs to let those he wrote to know, that the seducers who were coming among them would be false Teachers, and not false Prophets strictly so call'd.*" But we may well enough think, that St. Peter's design in using the more general term *false Teachers*, as it here stands, was to set those he wrote to upon their guard as well against such seducers as should not, as such as should, pretend to an extraordinary mission or inspiration. And to gather from his words, that there neither had been nor would be among Christians any false Prophets strictly so call'd (and nothing less will serve Mr. P.'s purpose) is to torture them very unreasonably: especially considering the great evidence we have (as before shewn) of the contrary in fact. And the distinction which the Apostle makes, as Mr. P.'s reasoning allows and supposes, between false Prophets and false Teachers, is a plain confirmation of the sense which I give of the former, and against which Mr. P. is disputing.

Thus

Thus unsuccessful have been Mr. P.'s attacks upon my interpretation aforesaid. I shall now give my reasons for it more distinctly than I have yet done, but as briefly as possible.

1. My first reason then is, because the term *false Prophets* doth properly signify such as pretend to a special Mission or Inspiration, and is so us'd in the N. Testament as well as Old, and that for ought appears every where. And 'tis to be noted that Mr. P. tho' he repeats the words, wherein I affirm the sense that I have taken to be the most proper in the general, doth not think fit to deny it.

2. My Interpretation is the only one agreeable to the general, if not universal, use of the word *Prophets* in Scripture; which, I conceive, doth seldom, if ever, signify any ordinary Teachers.

3. If we consider particularly our Saviour's own use of the words [*Prophets*] and [*false Prophets*] it doth not appear that ever he meant ordinary Teachers by them, true or false.

Lastly, My interpretation best suits the place in particular that we are upon *Matt. 7. 15, &c.* as I endeavour'd to prove, p. 7, 8. of my Remarks by shewing that the other interpretation by [*false Teachers*] cannot well stand there. Against which what Mr. P. hath now objected shall be consider'd in it's place.

In the mean time I am to tell him, that when I said, *that that may be a good way to detect false Prophets, properly so call'd, which is not of equal use for detecting other false Teachers*; he had no occasion to suppose (as he doth Def. p. 25.) that I meant, particularly, the failure of predictions, or, indeed, any other way in particular. I meant only to deliver a general truth in those words according to their proper signification, and to apply it to my purpose in the next: which were these, *And this is applicable to the way of detecting them by their fruits, as Mr. P. seems to understand them of their immoral practices.* Whereby I meant, that as, speaking generally, *that may be a good way* &c. so, in particular, the way of judging by fruits, taken for immoral practices, may be a good way to detect false Prophets,

Prophets, properly so call'd, and yet not of equal use for detecting other false Teachers. And for this, since I pretend not to say what is, but what (for ought I know) may be, I need give no other reason, but this question, Why may it not be? Yet I will add that it seems in the nature of the thing more unlikely, that a Prophet of the true God, properly so call'd, should be a notorious wicked liver, than that one of his ordinary Ministers should be so, and therefore could it be made out, that false Prophets, properly so call'd, are, according to the true meaning of Christ's rule in hand, discernable by their immoral practices, it would not presently follow, that ordinary false Teachers are equally so.

From considering who are the false Prophets, we come to enquire what are *their fruits* our Saviour speaks of. I said, *By their fruits, I conceive, we are to understand their fruits, as Prophets, i. e. chiefly, at least, their evil teachings or preachings; and not their wicked lives; because they are suppos'd to come in sheep's cloathing; which is not consistent with such open wickedness of life, as would manifestly detect them*: Where the candid Reader will easily suppose me to mean, what I really did, that if any wickedness of life would manifestly detect the false Prophets spoken of, yet their coming in sheep's cloathing was inconsistent with such open wickedness of life as would do it. And this overthrows Mr. P.'s observation, *that I suppose open wickedness of life would detect the false Prophets spoken of*: tho' if I allow'd that, it would not do his business, unless by *false Prophets* we are to understand *false Teachers* in general.

But he observes further that Dr. Hammond, Grotius, Whithy, Lightfoot, and others, explain the *sheep's cloathing* by sheep-skins, to be worn by the Seducers our Saviour speaks of in imitation of the old Prophets. For which I thank him; it being really what I should have thought of. For if the *false Prophets* in the Text were to be such as should wear sheep-skins to imitate the old prophets, it can not well be doubted, but they were to be in pretence proper prophets, and not ordinary teachers only. They would

not probably affect such an extraordinary garb, but to be thought extraordinary persons. Nor would my argument from the sheep's cloathing against the interpretation of *fruits* by *immoral practices* be much the worse for this acceptance of the cloathing. For they who put on the literal sheep-skin to be like the old prophets, would surely, put on the figurative one too, and avoid such open wickedness of life, as would presently discover they had nothing of the sheep, but the skin, and were as unlike the old prophets in sanctity of life, as like them in outward garb.

Mr. P. observes further yet from Dr. *Whitby* (who is with him in the interpretation of *fruits*, where Dr. *Hammond* and other of his former friends forsake him) that supposing the *sheep's cloathing* to relate to *hypocrisy and dissimulation, yet things feigned and dissembled only will in a little time be easily discern'd from that which is sincere and real*. But, with submission to so judicious an Expositor, I conceive it sufficiently attested by experience, that when a shew of sanctity is put on by a cunning Impostor, 'tis a long time before ordinary people can see thro' it; while numbers are deluded, and abundance of mischief is done. And 'tis granted that our Saviour speaks to the multitude: in whose eyes 'tis common for Impostors and Seducers to appear more holy than lawful and true Teachers. And to provide for that is commonly one of the most successful methods of seducement.

In the last place Mr. P. says (*ibid.*) *Let the Reader judge by the Context, which interpretation of these fruits is most natural*. But that if consider'd without prejudice, will leave him, I am satisfied to be determin'd by such kind of reasons as have already been produc'd. The Context (i. e. what relates to the caution against false prophets *Matt. 7.*) I own to extend from *v. 15.* to *v. 20.* inclusive. And what is there in all that, which will not stand very well with my interpretation of the *fruits*? Mr. P. asks (*Def. p. 26.*) What *fruit* can signify in *v. 19.* but the fruit of holiness? I answer, that there it signifies the *fruit of a tree* literally so call'd: but that which answers to it in the Moral may very well be *doctrine*. Or, more generally, what a pretended

tended prophet produceth, as such, what he speaks or acts as in virtue of his prophetic Mission. And so when our Saviour saith v. 19. *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire*; we are thence I conceive, to learn that every pretended Prophet that teacheth not good Doctrine, or, more generally, that produceth, as a prophet, what is not good, is to be rejected and treated as a false prophet, what other proof soever he may pretend to give of his mission: in like manner as every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is wont to be hewn down and cast into the fire. Or, possibly our Saviour might here intend to intimate that every such pretended prophet is as Mr. P. speaks *an heir of hell*. But I think the former interpretation much more suitable to the place. However my notion of the fruit will answer either way in this verse, and very well in all the rest: the drift of the whole being, that *as trees are distinguish'd by their fruits, one kind from another, and good ones from bad ones, so false prophets are to be distinguish'd from true ones by their fruits*; that is, say I, by what they produce as prophets. And I think nothing can be more natural.

But then Mr. P. would carry the Context beyond v. 20. saying (Def. p. 26.) *that our Lord in the next verse evidently confirms his interpretation*. And yet, as I shew'd before, there is not any evidence, there is no reason to think that v. 21. hath any particular reference to the foregoing business of false prophets. The words of it are, *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doth the will of my father, which is in heaven*. This, we see, is a general declaration of the insufficiency of professing Christ, and the necessity of obedience or good living, in order to Salvation, and doth not in the least appear to have any more reference to our Saviour's instructions about false prophets, than to the rest that went before: tho' if it had, it would by no means determine the question between us about the interpretation of *fruits*. The truth is, our Saviour having given a multitude of particular precepts and instructions concludes his Sermon with endeavouring to make his hearers effectually sensible

sensible of the necessity of obedience, or a practice suitable to his Doctrine. This part our Saviour enters upon v. 21. and carries on to the end of his Sermon.

And, certainly, if v. 21. have not, neither will the two next verses have, any particular reference to the caution about false prophets. Nor doth our Saviour in those verses say a word about them, or whom he shall count as such, but only tells us whom he will not own as his friends or true Disciples at the last day, but repell from him as aliens, to him unknown; namely, all workers of iniquity, even tho' they might or should plead that they had prophesied and wrought miracles in his name.

To confirm my interpretation of the fruits by which our Lord directs us to know false prophets, I observ'd that in other places (as *Deut.* 13. 1, 2, &c. *Matt.* 24, 23, 24, &c.) we are taught on the score of such fruits, as I judge to be meant in the place controverted, to reject even such pretended prophets, as seem to confirm their mission by signs and wonders. To this Mr. P. answers (Def. p. 27.) *that it doth not signify to alledge other cautions against false prophets.* And yet it always was, and, I believe, always will be, reckon'd a good way for attaining the true sense of Scripture in one place, to compare it with others that treat of the same matter. And thus much at least those Texts will shew, that my notion of the fruits is well enough adapted to the business in hand.

However, not regarding this my observation (as yet I hope, the Reader will) Mr. P. concludes this subject (Def. p. 27.) with Dr. *Whitby's* note upon the place (as he calls it) or rather with somewhat out of much more, which the Doctor says upon it; but which he doth not level against such as understand false prophets as I do, but against those, who (as his phrase is) *extend the word false prophets to all teachers of false doctrines*, and yet understand by fruits, doctrines, which I express'd my-self to disapprove. Yet it may be fit to obviate one objection, that may seem to be insinuated in the Doctor's words, and to concern me, as well as those others. And that is, *that the multitude, or the people* (such to whom our Saviour spoke) are incapable

pable to judge of Doctrines, or therefore of Teachers by them. To which I answer, that it cannot indeed be expected, that common people should be able to judge in nice and difficult points of doctrine. But the business of *false prophets* properly so call'd, is to impose upon men in some grand matters of faith or practice; of which ordinary people, that are but tolerably well instructed in true religion, may judge by the Rule, which God hath already establish'd: the design of Satan by such high impostures being to delude people beyond what by ordinary false Teachers he can propose to do.

I verily think therefore, that the interpretation which I have given, both of *false prophets* and of *fruits* is right, and hope I have made it appear to be worthy of acceptance: and yet Mr. P. shall rather say again, *that I seem to have some doubt of my own interpretation*, than I will affirm it impossible to be in either respect wrong. I shall not wittingly imitate that confidence, which I disapprove in others.

As to the word *Beware* Matt. 7. 15. Mr. P. is mistaken in saying, that I explain it by *rejecting or forsaking*. 'Tis true, that in the reasoning which he recites from me Def. p. 27, 28. I suppose that the false Prophets our Saviour there speaks of were to be rejected, or (if follow'd before) forsaken, when known to be such: but this not on account of the force of the word *Beware* (which he might see in my Paraphrase, I extend no farther than to signify, *Be upon your guard against*) but by reason of the nature of the thing. I thought it unquestionable, that whoever were meant more particularly by *false prophets*, they were such as were not to be receiv'd and adher'd to as our proper Teachers. Nor without that supposition will this our Saviour's Rule be any pattern for Mr. P.'s of success.

To prove that Teachers not to be rejected or forsaken may yet be ill livers, I quoted our Saviour's words *Matt. 23. 2, 3. The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do. But do not ye after their works; for they say and do not.* Which, said I, is a plain intimation that regularly appointed

by appointed Teachers are not presently to be disregarded on account of their unconformable practices.

Now I wish with all my heart Mr. P. had been pleas'd to tell me directly, whether he thinks my inference will hold or not. But instead of that, with unseasonable mockery, Def. p. 28. *he earnestly desires me to inform him, how this can consist with what our Saviour says elsewhere concerning these same Pharisees* Matt. 16. 6. *Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees.* Which leaven, he says, is afterwards interpreted to be their doctrine v. 12. Now, let any one fairly reconcile the two Texts of Scripture, and he will reconcile the latter with my inference from the former. *The leaven of the Pharisees*, with respect to their doctrine was doubtless, their corrupt principles or depravations of the Law. And there is no difficulty in supposing, that people may be upon their guard against, yea, *may reject or forsake* (if that were my interpretation of *Beware*, as Mr. P. by mistake affirms) the corrupt part of Men's doctrine, and yet not altogether reject their persons as Teachers, nor forsake the Assemblies, wherein they teach. And now, for reconciling the Texts, I acknowledge (nor did I ever speak or think otherwise) that the words *Matt. 23. 3. All whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do*, are to be understood with some limitation (as, *All whatsoever they bid you observe*, which is not manifestly against or besides the intention of the law, *that observe and do*) but 'tis clear from the form and coherence of our Saviour's words, that no such limitation may be admitted, as should leave no greater regard due to the Teachings of the Scribes and Pharisees that sat in *Moses Seat*, than to those of any other men. Our Saviour must mean that some special regard and submission (tho' not an unlimited obedience) should, for the time (till the expiration of the Law) be paid to them, as sitting in *Moses Seat*, and so being the ordinary proper expounders of the Law.

And as for the Ceremony of washing the hands before meat, which the Scribes and Pharisees taught as necessary to be observ'd, our Saviour could easily justify his Disciples in the omission of that upon my Scheme; either by

manifestly refuting the grounds of that doctrine, or by insisting on that superiour authority in expounding the Law, which he justly took upon himself. I hope now, Mr. P.'s earnest desire hath met with reasonable satisfaction.

But he cannot, it seems, forbear suggesting a suspicion (Def, p. 29.) *that I would not argue after such a rate, unless I was very conscious, that my party needed such a defence.* In answer whereto I assure him, that I have not taken upon me to write in Defence of any party, further than as the Interests of it seem to me combin'd with those of truth, peace and good order, and have argued at no other rate than that of a man convinc'd by the arguments wherewith he would convince others.

And here Mr. P. concludes the debate on his part about the meaning of our Saviour's Rule *Matt. 7. 15, &c.* In reference to which I desire it may be observ'd, that our Lord's example in giving this Rule was alledg'd by him in justification of himself with relation to his Rule of success, and upon that account consider'd by me. And therefore it is not enough for him to shew, that our Saviour's words will bear such an interpretation, as will serve his purpose. It concerns him, unless he will relinquish this Defence, to make it appear, that that is the most probable interpretation of them. On the other hand, it is enough for me in this case to shew, that there is another interpretation not suitable to his purpose, and yet as probable as that which is. For, a Defence that is built upon an interpretation, which may as probably be wrong as right, is of no strength or value. Which I do not say, as granting his interpretation, so far as express'd, to be as probable as mine (for that I take to be far otherwise) but to the end, that such as are not convinc'd of the truth of mine may yet by the precariousness of his discern the weakness of the Allegation, to the purpose of his Defence.

But I must observe yet further, that Mr. P. in all this dispute about our Saviour's Rule hath not given us any clear and full interpretation of it, whether true or false, but hath left us in the dark as to his sense of it in one or two material

material points. He interprets *false prophets* by *false teachers* in general; but whether he understands thereby *false pretenders to a Mission* or *Teachers of false doctrine*, tho' I intimated the distinction to him, he doth not tell us. Again, tho' I took it for granted before, that he included *rejecting* or *forsaking* in the meaning of our Saviour's *Be-ware of false prophets*, I am now brought into doubt concerning that also by the manner of his talking Def. p. 28. and am apt to think I was mistaken.

'Tis observable he avoids declaring himself in either of these points: and one would think it were for some reason. And indeed had his interpretation been more clearly express'd, I am perswaded, it had either been more easily disprov'd, or of little significancy to his purpose, if granted; the purpose, I mean, of countenancing his Rule of success without regard to Ordination.

He affirms however p. 29. *that he hath shewn how Christ's words ought to be interpreted*: of which the Reader is now to judge. But, supposing his interpretation to be right, *he thinks* (ibid.) *he has follow'd Christ's example in two things: first, in waving the business of mission: secondly, in proposing not the same, but such a kind of mark for men to judge by, as our Saviour does; that is, such an one as is easy, and liable to all men's observation.* But if our Saviour's be not, and his be, a mark for men to judge of the mission or authority of Teachers by; Or, if our Saviour's be not, and his be, a mark for men to judge by whether such or such Teachers be fit to be follow'd or forsaken, receiv'd or rejected; that is, in short, if there be not a due agreement in the thing to be judg'd of, the other resemblances are of no effect. And what agreement there is in that, according to Mr. P.'s own interpretation of Christ's words, till that is more fully settled, cannot well be determin'd. However, I insist that his interpretation is not probable, so far as it goes. And how easy his mark to judge by is, shall be consider'd hereafter.

At present, I may not pass over the unfairness he charges me with Def. p. 29, 30. The case is this; In the Preface to his former Sermon p. 4. he hath these words, *I am the better*

better pleas'd with what I have suggested to our people [viz. the Rule of Success] because I have only follow'd the example of our Blessed Saviour, &c. Matt. 7. 15, &c. Now by reason of his saying, not only that he had follow'd, but that he had *only* follow'd, our Saviour's example (which at least seems to imply that he had done no other thing than what our Saviour had done before) I thought fit to shew, that as his Rule is not the same with, so neither would it follow from, our Saviour's; yet without pretending to say, that he meant such a consequence, or what he meant, by his *only following*. And this is the unfairness I am guilty of; if any body can see it.

S E C T. V.

From the debate about his following our Saviour's example, Mr. P. passes to the defence of the hard censure, which he had made our Saviour's words to introduce, upon a great part of those Clergymen, who hold the Ministrations of Dissenting Ministers to be invalid: whom he charges with *loosness and debauchery; unthankfulness to God and Man for the greatest deliverances; the sowing strife and contention; the stirring up to sedition, rapine and sacrilege; the encouraging rebellion against the Best of Kings; and the prevaricating both with God and Man in subscriptions, prayers, and the most plain, express, and solemn Oaths.* This I call'd a most confident and uncharitable censure; alledging that the guilt (*viz.* as charg'd) is neither *confess'd, nor notorious, nor possible to be prov'd.*

Now he denies not the confidence of the charge, but supports it by saying, *the guilt is notorious*, and brings no other proof, but general assertions of facts, and constructions put upon them; which, if they are not *notoriously* true and right, to the extent of the charge they will not be sufficient for his purpose. Less may suffice to create a suspicion, or a probability: but less will not make the guilt *notorious*, or justify the confidence of the censure.

And whether these things are so I freely leave to (as whether any thing be notorious or not, is a question al-

viz. way ready for) the judgment of the world; and shall only beg leave to observe, 1. That matter of scandal strongly reported by enemies, or an opposite party, is not present-y to be taken for certain truth. 2. That outward actions are not confidently to be ascrib'd to scandalous inward principles, motives or designs, when they may proceed from other. And, lastly, That I do not pretend to excuse all Clergymen of the sort describ'd, but only to note the uncharitableness of the censure in the extent and confidence, wherewith it is deliver'd. And I cannot doubt but most men of Conscience will agree in my sentiments of it. And withal I am perswaded that a great part of the Clergy of that sort, on which the censure is pass'd, do not come behind their neighbours of any sort in sincere virtue and piety.

As for Mr. P.'s telling the world (Def. p. 31.) *that he is sometimes tempted to go by the Rule, which the late excellent Bishop Burnet is said to have observ'd in judging concerning the Clergy*, that need give us no disturbance, as serving more to the discovery of his prejudice and spite against us in the general, than to any real diminution of the credit of any part of us. But I cannot forbear saying, that if he had any real honour for that Bishop's memory, he should never have mention'd him in that manner.

To shew how Mr. P.'s censure aforesaid might be retaliated by such as would give themselves the like liberty, I had these words (p. 9. of my remarks) *should it be said that our Saviour's foremention'd Rule is a warrant to the people of England to beware of a great part of the Dissenting Teachers: for that tho' they come in sheep's cloathing, with great pretences to innocence, and meekness and moderation, yet their bitter and uncharitable reflections, their factious and schismatical practices, the rigorous and arbitrary proceedings of them and their disciples when in power, their eagerness after blood and revenge, these and the like fruits shew them to be inwardly ravening wolves: this were no more than might be said upon as good grounds, at least, as what is said by Mr. P. But his uncharitable censures, how provoking soever, shall never be retaliated by me, much less his confidence*

confidence in them imitated. But yet Mr. P. tells us (Def. p. 32.) *he believes every one will take these innuendo's to be design'd as so many charges by way of retaliation:* which for my part I cannot believe with him; because 'tis plain both that there is nothing positively charg'd, and that I expressly guarded against being understood to charge positively, as he did. Tho' if I had so charg'd, I doubt not but I could have supported it as well, and in some parts of it much better, than he has done his charge. And for the defence which he now makes against it, there would need little more than a bare recital of it to expose its weakness. But as I originally intended no more than I express'd, so I am resolv'd to leave it in the same condition. Only, in the last part of the defence which he makes, there is something of so particular a concern to me, that I am oblig'd to take a little notice of it. Upon the occasion of my mentioning *an eagerness after blood and revenge* in the manner aforesaid and no otherwise, he says (*ibid.*) *I can't imagine what he means; unless he is displeas'd with us, that we were not desirous, that encouragement should be given to the raising new rebellions, by sparing all that were open rebels.*

And so he proceeds meanly upon this no ground to insinuate a suspicion, that I am no friend to the Government; if it be not rather a reflection upon that, to suppose it any way concern'd in what I said. As if in the expression which he thus perverts, I might not refer to the behaviour of such as I spoke of in former days, when they had more power on their side; Or, as if I might not suppose many of them in these times (colourably) chargeable with desiring more severity, than the Government has thought fit to use, not only upon the open Rebels, but upon the Rioters and others, as well before the late Rebellion as since; or, with too eagerly espousing and declaring for severe methods in general; or, with promoting or encouraging barbarities and needless effusion of blood in the time of the Riots, or with other fruits of a cruel and revengeful temper. I had no ground, I assure him, to make such mention as I did of *an eagerness after blood and revenge* without being dis-

pleased

pleased with them on the score he is pleas'd to imagine. He might indeed think himself concern'd to vindicate his fraternity on this head, before any of them were charg'd, as by me they have not yet been: but to represent me upon this occasion as reflecting upon the Government was his pure kindness, or his affectation to *identify* the honour of that with the reputation even of the more violent sort of the Dissenting Ministers.

And now I take my leave of the matters of scandal aforesaid, wishing my Readers not to judge but with charity on either side. Neither my judgment, as to their fitness, nor my inclination, as to their agreeableness, leads me to deal in things of this nature, more than is necessary. And gladly should I have entirely pass'd by the hard censures and reflections, that came in my way: were I not convinc'd that it is high time for all sincere lovers of truth and peace to appear against these methods of bitter zeal and contention.

S E C T. VI.

We return now to our business in relation to trying Ministries by success. Mr. P. in the Preface to his latter Sermon p. 5. in order to remove the mistakes of some, who, as he said, had *overlook'd the nature of the success he had argued from*, told them, that *it is no other than the forming of Christ in men, so as that they become the epistle of Christ*, without adding a word more about the matter. This I observ'd *was a very uncouth way of explaining himself*; as I doubt not but indifferent Readers will agree it to be. But now I am to be represented as having reflected upon St. Paul. "*I am very sorry* (saith Mr. P. Def. p. 33.) *he should so esteem it; since I only made use of two expressions of the Apostle, who does not use to be counted an uncouth Writer.*" My comfort is, that I have an easy way to come off. I did not say the expressions themselves were uncouth, but that his way of explaining himself by them was so. I knew whence he took them; but I knew also, that it was not the Apostle, but himself, that put them together, and apply'd them in the manner and to the purpose

that he did. And as there is no harm in supposing, that there are *some things* in St. Paul's epistles *hard to be understood*, or that some of his expressions are to us of difficult interpretation, so 'tis certain that the two Mr. P. makes use of here are far from being any of the plainest he might easily have thought of. And as they are by him put together and apply'd, they make a sentence that needs explication, as much as any one in the Sermon it-self that was misunderstood.

However, I put a fair interpretation upon it, and have now his acknowledgment that it is right. And yet because I did not lay it down as his meaning, but with a *supposing that he spoke good sense*, he surprizes me with an expression that carries something worse in it than disdain, "*I am in-*" "*different* (saith he Def. p. 34-) "*whether I am allow'd to*" "*speak good sense or not, by men that will doubt of it, upon*" "*the account of my using the Apostle's expressions to signify*" "*the same thing that he meant by them.*" But he need not be so angry. 'Tis no disparagement to him to say, that as learned men, as he, have unawares spoken, yea, and printed, sentences, which, tho' sounding plausibly, cannot be reconcil'd to good sense, upon strict examination. And I did but tacitly intimate it was possible he might do the like in this place. To which he makes me a very disproportionate return, by wrongfully insinuating, that I have call'd in question the good sense of the Apostle's expressions according to his own use of them. When in truth the sentence in question is none of the Apostle's; and besides, I might innocently think it possible for Mr. P. to use the Apostle's words without his meaning: whether in fact he did or not. I am glad, however, we are so far agreed upon the nature of the success we talk of, *viz.* that it is *the making men true and sincere Christians, &c.* What it more particularly is, and how easy to be observ'd, will more properly be consider'd hereafter.

It had been objected, it seems, against Mr. P. that if the Apostle could prove his Apostleship by success (which was the ground of his argument) then every successful Minister would be prov'd an Apostle. To this Mr. P. answer'd,

That

That success only proves men to be what they pretend, and not what they do not. And this short answer he said was sufficient with respect to the aforesaid objection, and others of the like nature. Hereupon I observ'd, *that if so, then if any pretend a Call to the Ministry by special revelation, success will prove such their Call.* To this he now answers p. 34. "'Tis very true, it did so in the case of the Apostle, who was call'd by special revelation. And when I meet with any such success as my argument is grounded upon attending one who falsely pretends a Call by special revelation, I shall then think 'tis time to answer this objection: for at present I believe no such thing. But, whatever he says or believes, indifferent persons will surely allow, that if all such as pretend a Call to the Ministry by special revelation, and are attended with as good an appearance of success, as any Ministers ordinarily are, must be owned to have the Call they pretend to, here will be a wide door open to Imposture. For, that false pretenders should, for a time, have such an appearance of success, is far from being improbable. And what doth Mr. P. think of the Quaker-Ministers? They do, in fact, pretend a Call by immediate Revelation. Doth he think then they have such an one? Or, Will he say, that they are destitute of that success, which his argument is grounded upon?

And as to the other consequence, which I objected against the sufficiency of Mr. P.'s short answer aforesaid, viz. that, according to that, success might prove Regularity (if pretended) as well as Validity: it is not enough for him to say now (Def. p. 34, 35.) that none plead success for regularity. The question is, whether, if it should be pleaded (as v. g. if one pretendedly in Orders should alledge his success in proof of his Ordination) whether, I say, the argument would be good.

S E C T. VII.

Having examin'd all that Mr. P. had alledg'd, in the Preface under my consideration, to explain or vindicate his short way of trying Ministries by success, I propos'd (p. 10.

of my Remarks) to set the truth of the whole matter in a clearer light: and that by enquiring first, How the Corinthians were the Epistle of Christ in St. Paul's behalf, according to what we read 2 Cor. 3: 1, 2, 3. which Mr. P. makes the main foundation of his doctrine in this case. The words of the Apostle are these, *Do we begin again to commend ourselves? Or, need we as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all Men. Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declar'd to be the epistle of Christ, ministred by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.* Where the first verse needing no explication, I propos'd this paraphrase of the two latter, *Ye your selves are in effect a commendatory Epistle in my behalf; an Epistle, as never out of my affectionate remembrance, so open and legible to all the world. Forasmuch as your Conversion, so miraculously wrought, manifestly appears to be the work not of me, but of Christ by my Ministry, so that ye are in effect his Epistle certifying me to be his Minister; an Epistle not written with ink (as the letters of men commonly are) but engraven by the power of the Holy Ghost (miraculously concurring, by Christ's appointment, with my Ministry) not on tables of stone (as the ten Commandments were) but on fleshy tables, viz. the hearts of men.*

Here Mr. P. excepts, as I expected he would, against my taking the circumstance of miracles into the case: which yet I did not without giving, as I conceive, sufficient reason for it. But the matter shall now be more largely consider'd, in attendance upon Mr. P.'s motions.

"It would be very strange (saith he Def. p. 35.) if the
 "Apostle should never, through his whole argument, give the
 "least hint of that, upon which the greatest stress is to be
 "laid. A man must have taken very little notice of his close
 "way of reasoning, and his frequent couching an argument
 "as it were in a single word, who will expect to meet with
 "any thing of this nature in his Epistles. What Mr. P.
 means by the Apostle's whole argument, or how far he
 would

would carry it I know not. But all that St. Paul says in his place about the Corinthians, being an Epistle of Christ in his behalf is compris'd (for ought I see) in the three verses before recited. And in them, I say, tho' the circumstance of miracles is not express'd, it is according to all reasonable interpretation refer'd to.

The Apostle here, 'tis agreed, represents the Corinthians, as being themselves such an Epistle in his behalf, that he had no need of any other commendation to or from them, and says v. 3. *that they were manifestly declar'd to be the Epistle of Christ, ministred by him, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God.* What it was that manifested, or manifestly declar'd, or shew'd, this, the Apostle doth not express. But it is most evident, that this was manifested, chiefly, by the extraordinary and miraculous operations of the Holy Ghost attendant on his Ministry. These, certainly, were the most signal evidences, that the faith of the Corinthians *did not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.* Every body must own, that nothing made it so manifest, that the hand of God was with St. Paul in their conversion, as the extraordinary operations afore-said. And why then should they not be suppos'd to be refer'd to here? I see no reason why they should not, unless it be because it makes against Mr. P.'s hypothesis. To limit what the Apostle refers to (when his own words do not) so as to exclude any thing, which was proper to be refer'd to, is arbitrary; and if it be to exclude that which makes eminently to his purpose, it is most unreasonable: and this is what they must do, who will deny any reference to extraordinary and miraculous operations in the present case. That St. Paul doth not expressly say here, by what means the Corinthians *were manifestly declar'd to be the Epistle of Christ* &c. is ocular demonstration: and as that is agreeable to his *close way of reasoning, and his frequent couching an argument as it were in a word*; so it cannot be incongruous thereto, to suppose that he refers to that, which is evidently most proper to be refer'd to.

I had argued to the same effect before in words, which it will be proper to repeat. *Since Mr. P. himself insists* (said

(said I) *that the Corinthians were such an Epistle in regard of their Conversion by St. Paul's Ministry; since they were certainly converted in a miraculous way, St. Paul himself alledging 1 Cor. 2. 4. that his Preaching among them was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit, and of power, And 2 Cor. 12. 12. that the signs of an Apostle were wrought among them in all patience, in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds; and lastly, since they were undeniably an Epistle (as it were) the more universally known and read, and much the more manifestly declar'd to be the Epistle of Christ; by the miraculous manner of their conversion, I see no reason to suppose their bare conversion refer'd to, without regard to the said Manner of it, which makes so evidently for St. Paul's purpose, and gives so much clearness to his reasoning.* Upon this reasoning of mine, Mr. P. is pleas'd to make some remarks Def. p. 36.

His first is, *that it is not certain, that all that were converted by the Apostle were converted miraculously.* And I am ready to allow, that there was not a particular miracle in, or in order to, every single conversion. But that there were many (if any) conversions wrought by St. Paul at Corinth, to which the miraculous operations of the spirit attending his Ministry did not contribute, is not at all probable. And the Apostle doth not say each particular Convert was, but that the Corinthian Christians in general were, *manifestly declar'd to be an Epistle of Christ &c.* Which is sufficient answer to this Remark.

The design of his second is to shew, that the Apostle might, as he saw occasion, sometimes appeal to the miraculous operations of the spirit, without regard to the ordinary sanctifying ones, and sometimes to these latter without regard to the former. Which I grant, and add, that sometimes he might appeal to both sorts together. But my meaning is not, nor, I suppose, Mr. P.'s, that he might properly appeal to either sort in any case, or to any purpose; much less, that M. P. may arbitrarily suppose him to refer to either, as he sees fit. I consider this Remark therefore, only, as preparing the way to the third;

Which is, *that the only way to know, which he refers to,*

by considering the expressions he uses, and comparing them with the Context. But to this I cannot entirely agree: because (as is confirm'd by the practice of all Commentators) distant Texts compar'd, and the reason of things, many times are great helps in interpreting scripture; and because without one or both of these helps, I cannot see that the expressions of the Text or Context, or both compar'd, will bring the present question to any determination; much less, as he pretends, *clearly establish the interpretation he has given*, as exclusive of any reference to miraculous operations.

I hope as to the Text, by which I mean 2 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3. I have made out the contrary to such his pretence, to the satisfaction of any Reader that will judge freely for himself what I have done, without being byas'd by my adversaries saying that this or that *I am not able to do*. I have granted indeed that the miraculous operations of the spirit are not expressly mention'd in the Text; but then I have prov'd that they are there hinted at, or refer'd to. And tho' Mr. P. takes it for granted (Def. p. 36.) that the *sanctifying ordinary operations* are mention'd there, that is but an imposition upon his Readers. There is mention indeed of something written in, or on, the fleshly tables of the heart: but that this writing was, or was perform'd by, a *sanctifying ordinary operation of the spirit*, is not express'd: and that it was perform'd by such alone I know no reason to suppose. There were inward extraordinary operations, as well as outward, and those too in their effects, properly miraculous. Nor does it appear, but that outward as well as inward operations of the spirit might here be refer'd to, as contributing to the making that impression, which is call'd writing in, or on, *the fleshly tables of the heart*.

And it is to be observ'd, that St. Paul doth not say, *written in the fleshly tables of your hearts*, but, *in the fleshly tables of the heart*; which may be meant of the hearts of others, to whom the Corinthians were in effect an Epistle in St. Paul's behalf. And, as being undetermin'd I left room for this interpretation before in my paraphrase, so now I am little less than fully convinc'd, that that is the right;

right; so that the Apostle meant, that the Corinthians, in regard of their wonderful Conversion by his Ministry were fix'd, or had place, in the hearts or minds of all people (for *heart* commonly signifies the same as *mind* in Scripture) and so were an Epistle *known and read of all men* as the Apostle speaks *v. 2*. Their conversion with the circumstances of it made a deep impression on the hearts or minds of all about them, so that it was, as it were, written, imprinted or engraven thereon. It is more properly, to say, the Corinthian Converts were an Epistle thus written in the hearts of the people round about, than an Epistle written in their own hearts. And to this interpretation, methinks, we are also plainly directed by what St. Paul saith according to the generally receiv'd Reading *v. 2*. *Ye are our Epistle, written* (not in your, but) *in our hearts*: where I must own my-self upon fuller consideration convinc'd, that [*written in our hearts*] is the more natural Reading, as well as generally receiv'd, and attested by the best, and almost all, Copies. And if now it be ask'd how this writing, whereby the Corinthians were written in the hearts of other men, is said to be done by, or with *the spirit of the living God*, the answer is not difficult; The Holy Ghost by effectuating St. Paul's Ministry in so wonderful a manner to the conversion of the Corinthians impress'd them, as so converted, on the minds of all men round about.

Now if this interpretation be right, as upon mature and impartial consideration it seems to me the more probable there will be no colour for supposing any reference in the Text to the ordinary operations of the spirit, separately from the other. But, however, I have shewn that there is no sufficient ground for it on the foot of the other interpretation. And yet, were the ordinary operations of the spirit separately refer'd to in the latter part of *v. 3*. the extraordinary ones would never the less be refer'd to in the beginning of it, according to my paraphrase; the grounds of which I have sufficiently vindicated in that respect. And supposing the Corinthians were said here to be the Epistle of Christ on account of the ordinary sanctifying operations

rations of his spirit within them, yet if they were *manifestly declar'd* to be his Epistle, chiefly, by the extraordinary operations of the same spirit, that is enough for my purpose, since they could not be his Epistle to the effect of sufficiently attesting his Apostolical Commission to the world, but by being *manifestly declar'd* to be his Epistle.

I shall not need to examine particularly all that Mr. P. hath said (Def. p. 37, 38, 39.) about the Context; which may be (as he says it is) perfectly agreeable to his interpretation, and at the same time as agreeable to mine, *viz.* because importing nothing either way. Nor doth Mr. P. form any thing out of it, that looks like an argument for his interpretation, or against mine. A good deal of what he says has a tendency to persuade us, that St. Paul appeals to the Corinthians as an Epistle of Christ, not in attestation of his Apostolical Commission, but of his faithful Conduct in the exercise of it: which makes against Mr. P.'s own argument. For that may be a good proof of a Minister's fidelity in the discharge of his Office, which is not so of his Call to it. Nor indeed doth any thing in the Text or Context oblige us to interpret St. Paul as arguing here for his Call or Commission, and not for his Conduct only. But, indeed, I think it reasonable to interpret this place in conformity with 1 Cor. 9. 2. *The seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord.* And besides I was willing to give such an answer here, as would be easily applicable there also. For, doubtless, to be the Epistle of Christ certifying St. Paul to be his Apostle, and to be the seal of his Apostleship, is in effect the same, and must refer to the same operations of the Spirit.

Taking it therefore for granted (with Mr. P.) that St. Paul meant, that the Corinthians were an Epistle of Christ in attestation of his Apostleship, or extraordinary Commission from him, I doubt not but the impartial Reader, by what hath been said, will see, that the bringing in the term *miraculous* in my Paraphrase was upon good grounds, and that Mr. P. hath not given any tolerable reason for excluding the extraordinary or miraculous concurrence of the Holy Spirit from being refer'd to in the words under

our consideration. So that no regard is to be had, unless it be that of contempt, to Mr. P.'s assertion (Def. p. 39.) *that the bringing in the term, miraculous, is only to serve an hypothesis, and, that I and my friends could not give a satisfactory answer to his argument, but were forc'd upon an unreasonable interpretation to avoid it.* Had my answer been faulty, the blame would properly have lain at my own door.

But such Readers, as are not too apt to suppose, that truth and reason are mostly on that side, where the greater air of confidence appears, I am perswaded, will allow, that the answer I gave was good and fair, and stands still. Especially, when it is consider'd, that he that would establish a strange Doctrine on any Text of Scripture, ought plainly to shew, that that Text must needs be understood in that precise sense, which his doctrine requires. And that I here call a *strange doctrine*, which is contrary to the general sense of the Christian world: as, doubtless is the doctrine of proving the Call of Ministers by ordinary success, Ordination set aside: which, likewise, I conceive, is as generally esteem'd a doctrine of confusion.

But 'tis one of the great infelicities of our time and Country, that precarious interpretations of Scripture, and such as any modest Christian would distrust, at least, his private judgment in, are commonly advanc'd with the greatest confidence, not only in prejudice to the great interests of peace and order, but to the perverting, or unsettling and distracting men's minds, with relation to the most momentous truths of our Religion: which happens not only, when those truths themselves are directly attack'd, but also in consequence of that odd and multifarious diversity of opinions and practices, which such a temerarious way of interpreting Scripture introduces, maintains and promotes. And of these things the Pope's Factors make great advantage. This is a subject which calls for the most serious consideration. But I may not digress any farther.

I will add one word more in reference to the interpretation of the Text under debate, and for the illustration of what hath been already said. Suppose it were read in any good Author, *That the Turks defeated before Belgrade were*

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a sufficient attestation to the valour of the German Troops. Would it be reasonable to understand this barely of their defeat without any reference to circumstances ; or particularly, without any reference to those circumstances (viz. their advantages in numbers and Entrenchments) which eminently signaliz'd the valour of those that defeated them ? No, certainly. And 'tis the same unreasonableness, when St. Paul represents the *Corinthians* converted to Christianity as a manifest attestation to his Apostleship, to suppose either that he had no reference to any circumstances of their Conversion, or particularly none to those miraculous ones, which signally manifested a Divine concurrence, and were eminently the signs of an extraordinary Mission.

Now, supposing my interpretation to be right, I infer'd (Rem. p. 12.) that this reasoning of the Apostle *will not warrant any other ministry that is successful, unless it be miraculously so, i. e. successful by Miracle.* And here Mr. P. doth not deny the inference to be good, but represents it (Def. p. 39.) as improper for an Episcopal Clergyman to make ; because (as he will have it) it overthrows a plea of our's in vindication of the laying on of hands by Bishops in Confirmation. Now, to make the case parallel, our plea must stand thus, *The Apostles practice in laying on of hands was sufficiently warranted by their miraculous success.* Therefore, *The like practice of our Bishops in Confirmation is sufficiently warranted by their success which is not miraculous :* Which inference, as I do not think any Episcopal Clergyman ever made, so I am sure no one is by that character oblig'd to maintain.

I conceive now, that the answer which I gave to Mr. P.'s argument from 2 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3. needs no further vindication or support. But I will however, conclude this head with a more general one. Whenever any pretended Minister of Christ shall shew me such an Epistle in his behalf as the Church of *Corinth* was in St. Paul's, I will presently acknowledge the same as a sufficient evidence of his Ministerial Call. But if, in what he produces, the hand of Christ be not so plain, or his acknowledgment of the Minister more obscure, the sufficiency of St. Paul's allegation

will not infer the sufficiency of this other's. And there is no ordinary success, but what (as 'tis observable by man) comes far short of St. Paul's at *Corinth* in both these respects.

S E C T. VIII.

In the next place I proceeded to enquire how far ordinary success may justify or recommend any Ministry. And in order to shew, that it will neither prove a due or sufficient Call, nor yet justify or sufficiently recommend, the Ministry of such as have no due Call or Mission, I observ'd, *that it is usual with God to bring good out of evil, to make the wickedness of men subservient to his glory, and to compass a good end by means in the human agents sinful. And therefore (said I) good success alone can never justify the actions of men instrumental to it.* Which being so manifest, as 'tis deliver'd in the general, Mr. P. could not deny it: but rather than say nothing upon the occasion he would needs interpose his reasons against the application thereof to the business in hand, before he came to the proper place. But, however, I shall attend him.

And first he observes (Def. p. 40.) *that I acknowledge the success we speak of to prove the interposition of Christ, viz. by his Spirit in the hearts of men.* And that I shall always acknowledge; the success we speak of being the making men real and sincere Christians: which cannot be done without such interposition of Christ. But what then? *Now (saith he) where men's ministrations are counted by Christ utterly invalid and null, and he does not own them as his Ministers, tho' they assume that character; I cannot think he will favour them with such signal interpositions.* This is, surely, a very uncouth way of expressing himself. If the whole effect of his meaning be, that he cannot think, that Christ will ever interpose by his spirit in the hearts of men to give success to the Ministrations of those, who assume the character of his Ministers without a due Call, I cannot account for his expressions. And if he mean any thing more or other, I know not what it is. But, if I have rightly guess'd at his meaning, I desire to know why he cannot

cannot think, Christ will ever so interpose in such a case. And this I may well ask, since I gave a general reason in the words last quoted by him, and a more particular one in the next, for my thinking that Christ sometimes may : Mr. P., I confess, adds immediately, *that the Apostle, as he hath shewn, seems to be of the same mind, 2 Cor. 11. 17.* But I find nothing said by him in relation to that Text, except in p. 37. of his Defence ; and there he represents the Apostle's meaning 2 Cor. 11. 17. to be, *that they who rais'd a faction against him at Corinth had not such success as he had, because they were so unlike to him in sincerity in preaching the Gospel.* Which is not applicable (that I can see) to the confirmation of Mr. P.'s foregoing words under any imaginable meaning.

In the next place, whether conscious of having express'd himself darkly before, or for some other reason, he is willing to put a case of two Ministries, in some respects opposite to one another, as he tells me, *I know, he propos'd to try the pretences of Episcopal and Dissenting Ministers by success.* And 'tis true, I remember his using that form of words, but do not yet very well comprehend his meaning therein : unless he would as well condemn the Ministry that has the less success, as justify that which has the greater, and maintain that where the people are rebellious, the prophet (in his phrase) must needs be a false one. For which of the two Ministries is preferable, supposing them both duly Call'd, is certainly not the question before us. 'Tis not in handling that question, that we make such a mighty stir (as he calls it) about Ordination, or that I complain of his setting it aside. But let us see his case.

" *Let us then suppose (saith he Def. p. 40.) there are two Ministries, the one authoriz'd, and the other both irregular and invalid, utterly disapprov'd by Christ, not only in some particular less considerable circumstances, but in the very essence of it. I put it now to this Author. Does he believe in his Conscience, that Christ will by his own interposition give a greater success to that Ministry, which he utterly disapproves, than to that which he counts regular and valid.* And I put it to any judicious Reader, whether

whether this be not still more like an Orator than a Disputant, more like one that would confound, than one that would inform men's understandings. But (that I may speak to the purpose, whatever he means) I will suppose him to ask, Whether, putting the one Ministry to be authorized by Christ, and the other not, I believe that Christ may interpose by his Spirit to give greater success to that which he hath not authoriz'd, than to that which he hath. In answer to which, I declare my sincere belief, that Christ, in dispensing his graces by the ministrations of men, hath regard to other things besides the Authority or Call of them that Minister, and that inclin'd by those other regards, and especially by his compassion for well-meaning, tho' mistaken, people, he may by his Spirit in the hearts of men give really greater success to some (or, perhaps, many) unauthorized Ministers, than to other some (and, perhaps, many) that are authoriz'd by him; though they, or their people, on other accounts are not so meet for his gracious regards. But, other respects being equal, I doubt not but the authoriz'd Ministers are always the more successful, and am certain, that they who chase unauthorized Ministers knowingly and unnecessarily, or in disrespect to orderly appointments, have little reason to expect any solid spiritual benefit from them. And what I profess'd to believe that Christ may do (as thinking it not altogether improbable) I would not be understood to believe with any great assurance that he does.

But Mr. P. (*ibid.*) thinks it *notoriously evident*, that the *success of Gospel-administrations is chiefly among the Dissenters, and that the little Religion that is left in the Nation is mostly among them, notwithstanding the vast inequality of their number.* Add the same thing in effect, he says in the next page, *he believes is visible to all men.* I heartily wish such reproachful boastings of the adversaries of our Church, instead of raising immoderate passions, or prompting any of us to thoughts of revenge, may excite us, both Ministers and People, to greater care and diligence in the practical refutation of them. Yet no one can justly blame us for resenting such behaviour at the hand of those who

indulge, or for desiring that proper precautions may be us'd to prevent our needing indulgence from them, who are so forward, in their present circumstances, to declare their ill opinion of us. But as to the fact, which he thinks so evident, I am perswaded that almost all men, that have an extensive knowledge of the world, and are wise enough to see through those appearances, that are apt to deceive the vulgar, will agree, that it is not evident at all; and, that the number of such as are truly religious, for any thing that appears, may be, or rather in all probability is, far greater in the Episcopal Communion, than among the Dissenters. I see no reason to think otherwise, than that, as the Dissenting Ministry seem for want of a due Mission to have no title to success by Christ's promise, so in fact they have none but what may well proceed from other regards of Divine Goodness, and that the true and proper success of Gospel-administrations doth in fact chiefly attend the Episcopal Ministry. I cannot be so confident, as Mr. P. in relation to these facts of so difficult observation, but speak agreeably to the best and most impartial judgment I can make of them.

As for that outward appearance of success, which is level to vulgar observation, I believe 'tis frequent for unauthoriz'd pretenders to the Ministry to have a greater degree of it, than many of those, who are authoriz'd; both because neither sincerity of principle, nor uniformity of practice, comes within such observation; and because it hath been often found by experience, as that crafty and designing men can easily put on a form of godliness sufficient to deceive the vulgar, so that many well-meaning, but unstable, people, for want of being *wise unto that which is good*, as well as *simple concerning evil*, are apt to be deluded and seduc'd by that form, and by their measure of virtue and piety (unfeigned, so far as it goes) to add much to the shew of sanctity in the party. Besides, where the rightful Ministry is provided for and favour'd by the Laws of the State, and they who separate therefrom lie under some civil disadvantages, it is usual for the generality of such, as have really little or no religion at heart to profess themselves

themselves of the Communion of the Rightful, because establish'd, Ministry: while, of those that separate, such as do it really for Conscience sake are of course some of the more religious sort of people, and the rest are wont to be the more cautious in their conversation, for fear of that peculiar shame and disgrace, which must befall them, while they take so bold a step as that of separation, under pretence of Conscience; they should manifestly disprove such their pretence by the open wickedness of their other behaviour. Which things create a great disadvantage to the Episcopal Ministers here in *England*, when their success comes to be compar'd with that of Dissenting ones by such outward appearances as are of easy and vulgar observation.

And so it commonly happens, that they who out of Conscience, or pretence of Conscience, separate from the body of any Nation, and the Mode of Religion establish'd in it, whether their grounds be right or wrong, have the advantage in the obvious shew of Religious conversation. And here among us the Quakers in my judgment, as they are farthest separated, so they are surpassing in this respect. Their errors in doctrine indeed are gross, and their practices in consequence thereof enormous: but for an obvious shew of conscientious living according to their profession and the rules of Christian Morality as by them acknowledg'd, taking them in general, I think they exceed all our other Sects or Parties. But whether the number of sincere Believers in Christ doth proportionably exceed amongst them is a very different question. And, however, I am apt to think Mr. P. will agree with me that their Ministry is unauthorized by Christ. How the comparison stands between the Dissenting Ministers in general, and the Episcopal, with reference to that obvious appearance of success, which I am speaking of, I shall leave others to judge. I believe however, that the former have lost ground in that respect since the Toleration, and since their party have pleas'd themselves so much with the imagin'd favour of the Great. And there is little cause to doubt, but that the more the Dissenters shall taste of worldly prosperity, the less will

be the general appearance of sanctity in the body of them : because they that are not really Consciencious among them will more plainly shew themselves, and more, than now do, will joyn with them out of other principles than that of Conscience. Not to speak of that effect, which the temptations of prosperity may have in corrupting the minds, as well as unguarding the outward conversation, of many of them.

What follows next in Mr. P.'s Defence is his observation, how I am forced, as he speaks, to qualify my expression with the word *sometimes* ; when I said, that *it is not at all strange that God should sometimes give force and efficacy to his word and other means in themselves proper, tho' apply'd by usurpers of the Ministry, especially for the benefit of such, as in the simplicity of their hearts mistake those usurpers for lawful Ministers, and would not otherwise adhere to them.* Where I us'd the word *sometimes* in contradistinction to *always*, seeing no occasion to put *often* in the place ; whether I might or not : especially, since what seems strange and unaccountable to us is yet often fact in the free dispensations of Divine Grace, as well as the other branches of Providence. I have now, however, sufficiently declar'd my-self upon this subject ; and therefore proceed to what follows, which I shall set down in Mr. P.'s own words.

" *I cannot but think (saith he Def. p. 41.) what I suggested in the Sermon p. 21, 22. is considerable, That there is the more reason to argue the validity of a Ministry from the success of it, because this is an argument from the principal design and end of the Office. And, certainly, that must be the best Ministry, and most fit to be chosen, that best answers the end of the institution.* But, certainly, to argue men's right to any office from their answering the ends of it in our judgment, without considering how they came into it, how popular and plausible soever it may sound, is very delusive and pernicious reasoning. It tends to the destruction of Peace and Order, and to the justification of any wicked means by good ends. And the validity of a Ministry with Mr. P. includes Right, and Authority

from Christ, or *a real and true Call* Def. p. 49. and takes off the blot of usurpation ; as is evident from his reasoning all along. And to argue this validity from any success of an ordinary nature as by us observable, but especially from such as is of common observation, is what I charge with the evil tendency aforesaid. I grant, however, that that is the best Ministry, which best answers the end of the institution ; because I am satisfied, that that is never best done by a Ministry unauthoriz'd by Christ, be the appearances what they will. But that the common sort of Christians, or indeed any mortals, are so capable of judging from observation, what Ministry doth best answer the entire end of the institution, as that, without regard to the ordinary Rule of Mission, they may safely collect from thence, which is the best Ministry, and fittest to be chosen, is too unreasonable, and of too dangerous consequence, ever to be granted.

But, "*If Christ has promis'd to be with his Ministers alway to the end of the world, there can be no danger* (saith Mr.P.) *"in supposing those to be his Ministers he is apparently most with.* I suppose he means most with by his spirit to give them success. But of that, I say, we are not so capable of judging by what we can observe of the success, as that we may safely rely on a conclusion thence drawn, in the Choice of a Ministry, without respect to the manner of it's Call. We are not first to look for the performance of the promise, and thence infer who have a title to it ; but first we are to examine who have a title thereto, and then we may safely depend on the performance of it to them. And tho' it should happen in never so many instances, that they who can bring no better proof of their Ministry, than their success in an ordinary way, should to us have the greater appearance of such success, I cannot think it would be therefore safe or lawful to chuse such a Ministry, or to judge it more approved by God, than another which hath a regular Mission. And this, which I now say, I hold necessary to be maintain'd in love to truth and good order in the general ; let the case stand how it will in the particular, as to the comparison of success between

tween the Episcopal and Dissenting Ministries in *England*: of which I shall say no more.

I had said (Rem. p. 13.) that *if the want of regular Ordination may in some cases be dispens'd with, yet, without a due Call, i. e. some credible intimation of the will of God, appointing such or such persons to act as his Ministers, neither ought they to presume to act, or others to make use of them, as his Ministers.* Upon which, Mr. P. observes Def. p. 41, 42. *that I suppose there may be a due Call, that is, some credible intimation &c. without a regular Ordination.* But here he is a little too hasty. For my words imply only a notional difference between a regular Ordination, and a due Call, but not an actual separability. But, however, I very readily own, that God may, if he pleases, sufficiently intimate his will in this respect without regular Ordination, *viz.* in a miraculous way. Whether any possible necessity can supply the place of miracles to this purpose, I shall not now determine. But when I make a question of that, by *Regular Ordination*, I mean that which is good and valid according to the ordinary Rule: it being too manifest to be made any question of, that that on which the validity doth not depend in ordinary cases, may be dispens'd with in such as are extraordinary.

The next words of Mr. P. Def. p. 42. surprize me very much. They are these, "*And if it be so, I cannot imagine what he has to object against me, who suppose there is [are] all the other intimations of the will of God, beside that of a regular Ordination; that is, I suppose, the only thing wanting to be the Scripture rite, while the essence of Ordination is retain'd.*" By this, if I can understand him, he must mean, that when he argues the validity of a Ministry from success, he supposes *a solemn separation of persons to the sacred Office, done with Prayer, and by persons who have authority for it* (which things he makes to be of the essence of Ordination Def. p. 20.) And by the Scripture-Rite wanting, I judge he means *Imposition of hands*, by what he says Def. p. 21, 22. Now, if this were indeed his meaning, and he would more expressly own, that success is not to be apply'd to the justification of

any Ministry, but what hath the aforesaid Essentials of Ordination, I would have no further controversy with him on this subject, but leave the question of the absolute necessity of the *Imposition of hands* to be handled by others. But, if this be his meaning, how it can be reconcil'd with the other declarations of his intention, with the manifest tendency of all his arguments, and with the Conclusions themselves, as by him express'd, is past my comprehension.

S E C T. IX.

In the next place, Mr. P. quotes a passage from me, wherein I argue, that success (*i. e.* such success as amounts to the forming Christ in men, or the working in them an entire regeneration) *will not serve as a Rule, whereby to judge of men's pretences to a due Call, because it is neither discernible in it-self, nor by any ordinary tokens to be certainly collected by mortal men.*

To this argument he answers first (Def. p. 42, 43.) *That if it prove any thing, it proves too much; because it quite overthrows the Apostle's argument, even according to my own account of it.* By which he explains himself to mean, that by my own interpretation of 2 Cor. 3. 3. I allow the Apostle to represent the Corinthians as an Epistle of Christ to other men in his behalf, on account of a change of heart by the help of miracles wrought in them, and signified by the *writing in the hearts of men*; which they could not be, if there could be no knowledge of the hearts of others sufficient to be depended upon. This I take to be the full effect of his argument. To which I reply 1. That I did not by my interpretation determine the writing on the hearts of men, to be understood of the hearts of the Corinthians; and as I left it doubtful at first, so now I conceive, I have made it probable that it ought not to be so understood. But, however, 2. I allow that there was a change of heart or mind in the Corinthians sufficiently manifest to the world, and that change refer'd to by the Apostle, tho' not by it-self made the principal stress of his argument. But then I never said, that no change in the hearts of men can

be manifest to others by ordinary means, but only that such a change cannot, as is requisite to the success we are speaking of. It had been very absurd to doubt, whether there was not a great change wrought in the hearts of the Corinthian Professors; but whether that amounted to the forming Christ in them, or to a true regeneration, could not be so certain to the world by any ordinary means; nor is it probable, that that was consider'd by the *all men* (of whom the Apostle speaks *v. 2.*) by whom the Epistle of Christ he speaks of was *known and read*.

Mr. P. to my argument aforesaid answers secondly (Def. p. 43.) *That I am mistaken in supposing*, as, he says, I seem to do, *that in matters of moment we are not to go upon any thing less than absolute certainty*. But, indeed, I do not suppose that; but only, that that whereby we are to judge of men's pretensions to the Ministry ought to be somewhat, whereof we may ordinarily have what we commonly call *Certainty*, i. e. moral certainty or rational assurance; and that it ought not to be any thing, which by its own general nature is remov'd from our observation, so that we can rarely or never have a full rational assurance of it by any ordinary means: of which kind is that renovation of the inward man in our Neighbours, which is included in the success we are speaking of. I know we are often forc'd to go upon less than absolute certainty in matters of moment: but yet it cannot be suppos'd, that that should be given us to judge and guide our steps by in such matters, which is it-self, at least generally speaking, undiscernible. And there is a great deal the more need of certainty in the case in hand, because this mark of success is to prove a Ministry own'd and authoriz'd by Christ (as I think, I must understand Mr. P.) without any regard to the ordinary way of admission to the Office, or consequently to the security thereby provided against Intruders and Confusion. I cannot but hope that Mr. P. himself will agree that the certainty, I speak of, is necessary in this case, since he seems to own it p. 41. where he says that ordinary success, *where 'tis clear and plain* is sufficient to prove a due Call according to my definition. The only question then

then upon our present argument will be, whether the success we speak of can ordinarily be certain, or, in his phrase *clear and plain*, to human observers.

For the furer decision of which, it may be proper to consider a little more particularly than we have yet done what is included in that success we speak of. Mr. P. to remove a misunderstanding, was pleas'd to express it by *forming Christ in men &c.* which I interpreted (and that rightly, as he hath now acknowledg'd) to be *the making them true and sincere Christians &c.* I desire now it may be further consider'd what a true and sincere Christian is. And he will be found to be one, *that not only believes the Gospel of Christ with his understanding, and hath his heart influenc'd thereby in some measure, but by the co operation of the H. Spirit with his faith is become entirely devoted in heart to the obedience of God, so as effectually to prefer his service before all the things of this world, without a reserve for any one beloved sin.* That this entire devotion of heart to God's service (which yet may consist with some sins of ignorance or inadvertency, but no other) that this death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness, this real inward regeneration, this birth of God, by means whereof a man *neither doth sin, nor can sin*, wilfully, doth, as of necessity belong to the character of a true and sincere Christian (and therefore is included in the success we speak of) might easily be prov'd by many places of Scripture. But I suppose it will not be disputed, and therefore, without more delay,

I come now to consider Mr. P.'s third answer, or the third branch of his answer, to my argument from the undiscernibleness of the success we are speaking of. And here he says (ibid.) that *the Scripture all along supposes that men do by their outward behaviour discover the inward disposition of their hearts.* And I grant they do in some measure. But doth the scripture suppose, that men do ordinarily by their outward behaviour discover their hearts to the bottom; so that if there be any one unmortified lust, or any the least defect of requisite integrity, left therein, others may plainly and clearly see it? This, sure, will not be pretended.

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The wickedness indeed of too many is so notorious, that we cannot but, and therefore we safely may, judge, that their hearts are not entire with God : but to get a rational assurance of any others, that their heart is so, is another kind of business, and what we cannot attempt without being more strict examiners of other men's actions, and prying into their secrets, than we are allow'd to be, or, indeed, than human society will bear. And let any man experience'd in the business of religious self-examination but reflect, either how uncertain he is of the Christian integrity of his own heart, or with how much difficulty he hath arriv'd at a certainty thereof ; and, I dare say, he will despair of ever surmounting the far greater difficulty (in all ordinary cases at least) with respect to the hearts of other men, and see not only the vanity, but the sin also, of attempting it ; in regard that it would make him a very excessive busy body in other men's matters, as well as give him a great deal of trouble, with little or no prospect of success. Doubtless, we are to hope well, and, in some measure, to believe well, of all those whose conversation, as far as to us manifest, is Christian-like, and to treat them accordingly : but for any certain discovery of the Christian integrity of their hearts, we are to leave that to the trial of the last day, as being at present both out of our reach, and not fit to be reacht at by us.

The short of what I allow, and what I deny, in this respect is, as follows. I allow 1. That wicked men do often by their outward behaviour give others a moral certainty of their want of Christian integrity, i. e. of that entire devotion of heart to God's service thro' faith in Christ, which I before more at large describ'd. I allow 2. That men often by their outward behaviour give others a moral certainty of some degree or measure of goodness in their hearts, in such sense as is common, and wherein there may be some degree or measure of goodness, without the Christian integrity aforesaid. I allow 3. That men may by good outward behaviour, uniform and constant, give others sufficient ground, not of hope only, but of probable belief, that their hearts are entire with God. How commonly

monly this is done, I say not. But I deny 4. That we can have, by any ordinary means and in ordinary cases, a moral certainty of the Christian integrity of other men in the sense aforesaid. And if such certainty can't be come at, I think it is manifest, that such success, as supposes the said Christian integrity wrought in men, cannot suffice as a Rule or mark, whereby to judge of men's pretensions to the Ministry, without regard to Ordination.

Let us see now whether the passages of Scripture quoted by Mr. P. on this occasion (Def. p. 43, 44.) fairly interpreted prove any more than I have allow'd.

And first he alledges *Matt. 12. 33, 35.* There seems to be some art in omitting *v. 34.* I shall set down all three *V. 33. Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. V. 34. O generation of Vipers, how can ye being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. V. 35. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things.* They are words of our Saviour to the Pharisees about the meaning and drift of the former part of which Commentators pretty much differ. The most probable interpretation of the whole to me is this. *V. 33.* Either take care to be really and inwardly, as well as outwardly good, or else, do not by an outward shew of goodness go about to impose upon people, who can judge of men no other wise than by their outward behaviour. *V. 34.* O wicked and deceitful generation, how can ye, so evil as ye really are, frame your-selves to speak good things, as ye frequently do? 'Tis natural for men to utter such things, as their hearts are most full of. *V. 35.* And so good men are wont to speak good things, and evil men evil things, each sort agreeably to what abounds in their heart. Whether this interpretation be right throughout or not, I know none more probable; much less such an one, as will infer, that it may be certainly and ordinarily known by a man's good outward behaviour, that his heart is entirely Christian. I suppose Mr. P. would hardly conclude from hence, either that

that whoever speaks things materially good, or that whoever ever abounds in such speeches, may, with moral certainty, be judg'd entirely good, or good in the degree requisite to Christian integrity. And then I see not how our Saviour's words can with any colour be drawn to oppose what I maintain.

To proceed. The most that can be gather'd from *Ja. 2. 18.* (*I will shew thee my faith by my works*) is, that a man may by his works shew that he hath faith, and a faith that influenceth his heart. But whether the heart be sufficiently influenc'd by it is still another question.

When St. Paul sent *Timothy* *1 Thess. 3. 5.* to know the faith of the *Thessalonians*, we are in reason to understand no more thereby, than that he sent him to see, whether they continued stedfast in the profession of the true faith, and in behaviour suitable thereto. And in like manner are we to understand the good tidings of their faith and charity, which *Timothy* brought back, *v. 6.* And when the apostle says of the same *Thessalonians* *1. Ep. to them c. 1. v. 8.* that *in every place their faith to Godward was spread broad*, it were very unreasonable to understand thereby, that it was certainly known every where, that their hearts were entire with God through faith. Nor is there any ground to suppose, that when St. Paul *Philem. 5.* speaks of his having heard of *Philemon's love and faith, which he had toward the Lord Jesus and toward all saints*, he means, that he heard from such as certainly knew, that his faith and love aforesaid had all the perfection requisite.

Nor doth the certainty which I require, or rather the unattainableness that I hold of the certainty that were requisite in the present case, make void such directions as *2 Tim. 2. 22.* of following peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. Because the judgment of charity, or any probability of the purity of other men's hearts may suffice to some purposes, and yet not to other. And so tho' I am bound to follow after peace and communion with all those, that, as far as appears, are Christians are in heart, without being certain that they are so; it will not follow that I may safely build my choice of a Ministry

nistry to sit under, upon the suppos'd purity of other men's hearts, or upon any other ground, without regard to Ordination, before I am very sure of the ground upon which I build.

And as to the directions given by *St. Paul*, in his Epistles to *Timothy* and *Titus* (which *Mr. P.* also urges) about the qualifications of persons to be ordain'd ; as, that *they should be faithful men*, that they should *hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience*, and since the obligation upon Ordainers is certainly no more, than to take care, that the Ordained, as near as they can judge, be so qualified. And whereas *Mr. P.* asks, *What other certainty the Ordainers can go upon in judging of these things, than what the people may in judging of success* : I answer 1. That the Ordainers are to be suppos'd far better judges of the sincerity and integrity of men's hearts, than the common sort of people, and therefore may have greater certainty of the qualifications aforesaid, than the people can have of the success we are speaking of : especially since 'tis the business of Ordainers to make a more particular and exact enquiry into the qualifications of those to be Ordained, than it belongs to private Christians to make into the hearts or conversations of their neighbours. And yet 2. Forasmuch as every deficiency in the qualifications describ'd doth not null the Ministry, as doth the want of a due Call, there is more need of certainty as to that (success, suppose) on which the proof of the Call is to depend, than as to the qualifications requir'd. Besides 3. When men venture out of the ordinary way, and forsake the guidance of the general Rule, as, I suppose, it will be confess'd, they do who judge of and chuse Ministries by success without regard to Ordination, they ought to be very sure of the mark by which they guide their steps in so doing : because they have develtled themselves of the great security of having acted in submission to common Rule and Order. Whereas as they who having authority ordain persons, that as well as they can judge are duly qualified, but who perhaps may have some inward and latent deficiency (*v. g.* as to the purity of their conscience) run no other hazard than what

by common Rule and Order they are bound to run, and without which they cannot Ordain at all.

For a fourth and last answer to my argument from the undiscernibleness of Christ form'd in men, or of their real inward regeneration, Mr. P. says (Def. p. 44.) that *he can never believe, that in those congregations, where there are such outward appearances, as the Scripture directs us to judge by, i. e. where the Christian virtues appear most exemplified in the whole conversation, there may be as few persons therein endued with real and substantial holiness, as in others, where there are not the like.* But whether he will believe it or not, the thing is certain, that in such Congregations, where the Christian virtues appear exemplified in the whole open conversation of more persons, than in some others, there may yet be as few endued with real and substantial holiness, as in those others. The reason is manifest, viz. Because the regularity of open conversation may or may not proceed from a right and sufficient Christian principle, may or may not be accompanied with the Christian integrity of heart before describ'd, or with a suitable regularity in that part of the behaviour, which is more retir'd from, or disguizable to, human observation: and therefore an advantage in the outward appearances (even upon the whole of the open conversation) doth not infer an advantage likewise in the inward reality of Christian virtues.

If indeed to such as are the best judges, and who are particularly well acquainted with several Congregations, there do seem to be many more instances of the uniform practice of Christian virtues throughout the observable conversation in one than in another, it may be probable, tho' not certain, that in the same there are likewise more persons endu'd with that real and substantial holiness, which is requisite in every true Christian. But for the common sort, tho' they can judge well enough of their Neighbours behaviour in some respects, and easily discern some kind of faults, they are so easily kept in the dark as to some others, and 'tis so much out of their sphere to judge upon the whole conversation of their Neighbours, that there is

no stress at all to be laid upon their opinions, that such or such are persons of uniform piety, or that there are more of them in this Congregation than in that. And to put them upon forming such kind of judgments, and making the proper observations in order thereto (without which it were absurd to put them upon judging) is to do them, as well as society in general, a great deal of wrong : as 'tis to teach them to be busy-bodies, to divert them from their proper business, and particularly from the due care of their own souls, very much to endanger their becoming censorious Pharisees, or shameless Publicans, and either way to make them self-conceited and untractable. For the truth of this I appeal to all that know mankind. And particularly I appeal to all experienc'd Pastors, whether they do not find it necessary to call people off from being curious observers of other men's lives, instead of prompting them to it in order to make a judgment of their spiritual state.

And now what Mr. P. is pleas'd to call a cavil, I hope, sufficiently appears to be a good argument, against the making that success which is *the forming Christ in men*, a Rule or mark whereby to judge safely of pretensions to the Ministry, without regard to Ordination, and much more against it's being (as he pretends it is) a Rule level to the lowest capacity : *viz.* Because Christ form'd in men imports something not to be discern'd with certainty sufficient for such a purpose.

S E C T. X.

But to judge of a Ministry by success, we must not only be able to know that Christ is form'd in such or such men, but also whether by the means of this or that Ministry. And therefore I urg'd further (Rem. p. 14.) *that if we could discern when Christ is form'd in men, yet were it impossible to know, in any ordinary way, and with any certainty, that that work is wrought by such or such a Ministry, as instrumental under God, and not by some other method of Divine Grace ; unless we may be otherwise assur'd, that the said Ministry is of God, i. e. call'd by him, and so entitled to his blessing and concurrence.*

To

To this, after calling it *another cavil* (language, which value not when so misapplied) he says Def. p. 44. *he cannot imagine, I can have any other ground for this assertion than this; that God never concurs with any Ministry, but what is call'd by him, and so entitled to his blessing and concurrence.* Whereas I verily thought he could easily have imagin'd, not only that I went upon some other ground, but what that was; and did not in the least suspect he would have imagin'd, that I went upon the ground, which he assigns; which so manifestly contradicts what I asserted and argued from but a leaf before, and plainly suppose again soon afterwards. It were fairer to represent my assertions as wholly groundless, than as so inconsistently founded, and then to expatiate and divert himself (as here) in exposing the inconsistency, which nothing but his own unreasonable supposition hath introduc'd.

I did not doubt but any Divine (at least) would readily have suppos'd, that my assertion under present consideration was grounded (whether he thought it well grounded or not) on the imperceptibility of the special concurrence of the H. Ghost with the means us'd; to which concurrence the work of our sanctification is to be attributed. By reason of which imperceptibility, tho' on the score of the divine fidelity we may be sure of having that concurrence where 'tis promis'd, we cannot be sure we have it with any particular means, unless we are otherwise assur'd of a promise belonging to them: and so (to make the easy application) we cannot be sure we have it with the ministrations of such or such men, unless we may be otherwise assur'd that they are duly call'd to the Ministry, and thereby entitled to God's blessing and concurrence. Nor, when men are sure by the effect that they have receiv'd the special influences of the sanctifying Spirit, can they ordinarily be sure in concurrence with what means chiefly they receiv'd them, without the (at least) assisting evidence of a promise belonging to such and such means. *The wind bloweth where it listeth* (saith our Saviour to Nicodemus Jo. 8.) *and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that*

is born of the spirit. Which words are very generally understood to teach us, that the regenerating operations of the Holy Ghost within us are imperceptible, and undiscernible but by the effects. And however, that they ordinarily are so, is, I conceive, sufficiently attested by experience.

But Mr. P. (who seems to have had a notion of my true ground, tho' willing to sport himself with an imaginary one) says Def. p. 45. that *a man may be sensible by what means he was made seriously to mind religion, and what it is that God makes use of* [I suppose, he means, makes effectual] *to direct and encourage him in it.* And the truth is, that good Christians, or they who think themselves such, are often apt to fancy, they know very well, by reflection on what they have inwardly felt, by what particular means chiefly they were brought to a religious frame and temper of mind. But this happens generally, either from their not distinguishing between what is sensible, and what is insensible, in the work of regeneration or true conversion, or from their too hastily supposing (what they cannot ordinarily be sure of) that when the immediate sensible effect is greatest, the lasting insensible one is so too. The immediate sensible effects are such affections, purposes and resolutions excited in us, as are really or seemingly, completely or partially, good, and those, perhaps, presently follow'd by some suitable works. Which effects sometimes may be wrought by the natural efficacy of the means, without any special interposition of Christ by his Spirit. The grand and lasting, but in it-self insensible or unperceivable effect, is a fundamental change in the habits and dispositions of the Soul, wounding and mortifying sin at the very root, and dislodging it from it's inmost fastnesses. And this is the peculiar work of the H. Spirit within us. And as mysterious as well as great work it is; and therefore presented in Scripture by those mystical expressions, of new birth or regeneration, a birth of God, a new creation, a forming of Christ in us, a dying unto sin and rising to righteousness, &c.

Now, doubtless, this work is ordinarily done by the current

currence of the H. Spirit with the appointed means, among which are the ministrations of men duly call'd to Minister in holy things : because God would not have appointed such and such means to be us'd by all, if the H. Spirit were ordinarily to do the work without them ; nor can we doubt but his blessing always goes along with his own appointments, when rightly us'd. But as the operation of the Spirit in carrying on this work is in it-self (at least, ordinarily) imperceptible, and the work when done is not known to be so, but by the fruits of time, upon various trials, and much self-observation ; so to conclude for certain that the H. Spirit makes the chief advances in it concurrently with those means, which produce the greatest sensible effects, is unwarrantable : because there is no necessity either by nature or institution, that the insensible effect should be proportional to the sensible, the fundamental change to the superficial ; and because experience hath often prov'd, that when the immediate sensible effects are greatest, there may be nothing done but what is superficial and transient. As when a man is mightily affected with a Sermon for the present, and never the better for it the next day, or abounds in (seemingly) pious affections, purposes and resolutions, in sickness, and yet returns as speedily to his sins as to his health.

When therefore others pretend to tell us with what means chiefly the H. Ghost concurr'd in working their conversion (as Mr. P. says *ibid.* *Christians themselves are here the most competent judges, and we can have no other certainty of this, than from what they declare themselves*) we cannot ordinarily be sure, that they are not mistaken as to that, supposing them to be really converted ; besides that they may be, for ought we certainly know, unconverted still, and then to be sure no competent judges of the matter. And when a great deal is attributed to a Ministry, not otherwise appearing to be duly call'd, or consequently entitled to a blessing, we have the less reason to be confident, that there is no error or self-delusion in the case ; a case, wherein men are so obnoxious to it.

'Twas no mistake therefore, I conceive, when I said,
that

that the wisest of uninspir'd mortals are not competent judges (i. e. are not able to judge with certainty sufficient for the purpose in hand) of the real inward success of any Ministry, much less the ordinary sort of Christians. And yet I allow what Mr. P. says too Def. p. 46. that ordinary Christians are competent judges of the inward success, so far as there is any occasion for their judging of it: because I maintain, that they have no occasion or warrant to judge of it, so far as it were needful, if the pretensions of Ministries were to be determin'd by it, without respect to Ordination.

Why Mr. P.'s Rule of success (as I have hitherto understood the success it goes upon) must be level to the capacities of all, or else (as Mr. P. argues ibid.) that would not hold, which St. Peter supposes 1 Ep. c. 2. v. 15. and c. 3. v. 16. I cannot see. For, certainly, a constant course of well-doing, or diligent care to keep a good Conscience, must be the best way to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, and to make them ashamed, who speak evil of us, as evil doers, and falsely accuse our good conversation in Christ: whether it prove to other men, and that with moral certainty, that our Christian-like conversation is rightly and sufficiently radicated or not.

S E C T. XI.

I proceed therefore to consider, whether the next passage in my Remarks, which seems to have given Mr. P. great offence, be not, however, strictly justifiable.

My words are these, I hope Mr. P. after having told us, out of declar'd purpose to obviate mistakes, that the success he argues from is the forming Christ in men, will not after all come and say, that he meant no more by it, than the bringing their outward conversation to a Christian-like form: tho' I see several indications of an unsettledness in his notions about this matter. Mr. P. in transcribing this passage from me omits the word, outward. However, he immediately exclaims ibid. And is this the rational and moral conduct of the man, who is such a severe and watchful censurer of mine? To which I answer with assuring him, that

'twas

'twas the conduct of a man, who was as watchful over his own Pen, as what flow'd from his Adversary's, and took no more care about any thing, than that his censures might not be more severe than just. So that should he prove mistaken after all in any of them (as he pretends not to be infallible) he will have the testimony of his Conscience, that it was without any *base, malicious, or dishonest* intention. And what Mr. P. charges of that kind I know and declare to be false : nor do I fear that the Reader will see any reason to disbelieve me.

But let us see how he manages his accusation. "*Let any one* (says he *ibid.*) "*peruse the whole Sermon, and see whether he can find the least syllable to incline him to think I intended persons should any otherwise judge than by the conversation.* But what doth he mean by this ? Did I ever represent him as intending, persons should any otherwise judge of the success of the Ministry, than by the conversation of the people ? It was never in my inclination, never in my thought so to do. If the long passage he quotes from his Sermon upon this occasion (Def. p. 46, 47, 48.) be only to clear this to be his meaning (as I know not what else he can design by it) he might as well have spar'd the trouble of transcribing it : for that is what I never offer'd to call in question. And yet all his charge of malice, baseness, and I don't know what, goes upon the supposition, that I would fix another meaning upon him in the passage last quoted of my Remarks. Doth he really know no difference between *judging of success by the conversation*, and, *placing it in no more than bringing the outward conversation to a Christian-like form* ? And what I express'd my hope of was, that he would not after all say he meant the latter : and I express'd it in as plain terms as was possible. If he cannot, or will not, the Reader, I hope, can and will distinguish between judging of success by a thing, and placing it in it.

Were there occasion, I would transcribe the same passage from his Sermon, that he has done, or part of it, to shew that he could not consistently mean, what I said I hop'd he would not pretend he did. But there is no occasion.

'Tis manifest, that the forming Christ in men (which, he stands to, is the success he argued from) is more than the bringing their outward conversation to a Christian-like form; and he has sufficiently own'd that he meant more by it, even the making them true and sincere Christians. Nay, he supposes it and allows it in this very place, where he so abuses me for hoping he would not deny it. After his long Quotation from his Sermon before hinted at, he subjoyns (Def. p. 48.) "*And now can any one who reads this make any doubt, whether I design'd Christians should judge of the success of a Ministry by the change of the heart, any otherwise than as that change discover'd it-self in it's fruits in the life and conversation?*" And can any one, say I, that reads this, make any doubt, but that the success he speaks of imports a change of heart, and therefore is more than rectifying the outward conversation? And a little lower he repeats his acknowledgment, that the success he argues from is the forming Christ in men, and only denies *giving the least hint of his intending any other way of judging, whether Christ be form'd in them or not, than by what appears in the conversation*: when I never said or suppos'd he did give any such hint; nor hath he produc'd any words of mine, that look like so saying or supposing. Scarce ever did I see any thing more absurd than his conduct upon this occasion. It looks as if he had penn'd, without any thought, just what a causeless impotent passion dictated. He may well excuse this plainness of speech, if he will consider, what an ugly imputation he here lays upon me, and (as his pleasure is) my friends without any just provocation.

But I must not forget, that whereas I said I saw *several indications of an unsettledness in his notions about this matter* (i. e. about the nature of the success he argues from) he now (*ibid.*) defies me and my friends to produce them. And knowing of no obligation upon any of my friends to do it for me, I, who likewise best know what I had in my view, must undertake it my-self.

His uncouth way of explaining this matter, where his business was to remove mistakes about it, I look'd upon as

one

one indication, that he had not settled any clear and distinct notion of it in his own head. Otherwise, thought I, he would not in that place have contented himself with saying, *it was no other than the forming of Christ in men, so as that they become the Epistle of Christ*, without telling us in what sense he understood those mystical expressions. And tho' this was said (as he now tells us, and I imagin'd before) in opposition to such as set the success he speaks of too low, that is no excuse for his not explaining himself clearly, how low or how high he would have it set; especially, when he did not acquaint his Readers how low it was set by those, whose mistake he was willing to rectify. This, I say, looks as if he was not resolv'd within himself, how he would have it distinctly stated. And whenever I see men, that pretend to explain themselves in order to remove misapprehension, yet leave their meaning involv'd in obscure or mystical expressions, I am apt to look upon it as an indication of this nature; unless there be reason to suspect that they have a distinct meaning, but are willing to conceal it: which I did not take to be Mr. P.'s case.

Another thing was, that tho' by this expression of *forming Christ in men*, and by several others in the Sermon itself, it seem'd to me, that he could understand nothing less than (what he has now own'd he did) the bringing men to be true and sincere Christians, yet I saw that elsewhere (as p. 18, 19. of the Sermon) he represented the success he spoke of as *liable to the observation of the meanest Christians*, and his Rule grounded thereon as *level to the capacities of all*: and I could not imagine himself to believe that That real inward regeneration, or entire change of heart, which is requisite to the becoming a true and sincere Christian, was a matter of so easy observation. And therefore it look'd to me, that his notion of success was lower in one place than in another.

These were the indications of unsettledness I had in my view. That they were certain ones I did not say. I avoid'd it purposely for fear of wronging him. He hath now, however, very much confirm'd them by his great wrath

(as it seems) at my expressing an hope, he would not say at last, *that he meant no more by success than bringing the outward conversation to a Christian-like form*, and his so inconsistent talk upon that occasion. 'Tis next to impossible he should have a distinct settled notion of the matter, and talk at that rate. If he means no more by success than *the bringing the outward conversation to a Christian-like form*, why doth he not only express it by forming Christ in men, but also allow of my interpretation of that expression to take in Christian integrity of heart, and many other ways express himself to the same purpose? And if he doth mean more, than the rectifying the outward conversation as aforesaid, why is he so angry with me for hoping he will not say, he did not mean more? Surely he doth not know what he means.

If he would say (and now I do my very best to help him out) that the success he goes upon is indeed the forming Christ in men, but that he means that in the use of his Rule it should always be suppos'd that Christ is form'd within, when the outward conversation is brought to a Christian-like form: he must give me leave to tell him that That is inconsistent. It is to say, and unsay. It is in words to place the success he goes upon in the forming Christ in men, but in effect and truth to do otherwise. For by virtue of that supposition, a Ministry that reforms the outward conversation will be successful in the meaning of the Rule, tho' it be not successful to the forming Christ in men. And when we are in any measure certain, that the outward conversation is by a Ministry brought to a Christian-like form, and (as it will ordinarily, if not always, happen) not equally certain that Christ is form'd within, we shall be more certain that the said Ministry is successful in the true intent and meaning of the Rule (if it be to be understood with the supposition aforesaid) than that it is successful to the forming Christ in men. Which could not possibly be, if the forming Christ in men, were really the success which the Rule goes upon. But to proceed,

Another point there is relating to the success from which he argues, which wants to be a little better settled: and that

that is, Whether success upon any, how few soever, be sufficient ; Or, if not, What measure of success his argument requires. If success upon any be sufficient ; then Mr. P. must say, that every pretended Ministry that hath success upon any, how few soever, is call'd and authoriz'd by Christ, and that *God never gives force and efficacy to his word and other means in themselves proper, when apply'd by usurpers of the Ministry*; and yet Mr. P. did not think fit to say that God never did so, or that it were at all strange, if he sometimes should, when (Def. p. 40.) he recited and remark'd upon my saying, that it was not at all strange that God sometimes should. And if success upon any be not sufficient, then Mr. P.'s principle will not always hold, that the interposition of Christ by his spirit in concurrence with a Ministry proves such Ministry authoriz'd by him: nor do I know how to understand Mr. P. when in the page last quoted he says, that *he can't think Christ will favour usurpers of the Ministry with such signal interpositions*. Besides, it seems to me to remain unsettled, what measure of success is sufficient to argue from ; unless we are to understand Mr. P. to have fix'd it to a superiority of success upon a comparison made between two Ministries in some respects opposite, and whereof it is presuppos'd that one is authoriz'd by Christ. But that such a superiority is the only ordinary success, in Mr. P.'s notion, to be depended upon as proving a Ministry authoriz'd, I dare not say. I rather think the contrary indeed : and therefore wish he had explain'd himself more fully on this head.

SECT. XII.

I had said, that all that Mr. P. seems now willing to contend for is, *that success will prove the Validity of a Ministry*. Upon which he asks (Def. p. 48, 49.) by *what it does in the least appear, he was ever willing to contend for more* ; and takes some pains to shew it improbable that he ever was. And, truly, I believe he never was ; provided we take validity in that which I now think to be his sense.

That is, if to prove a Ministry Valid be to prove it, not usurp'd, but really and truly Call'd and Authoriz'd by Christ, then he never meant to contend for more than Validity to be prov'd by success. But if to prove a Ministry Valid be only (as I always understood it, and as I take it properly to signify) to prove it effectual to the proper purposes of a Ministry, then he does still contend for more, viz. for Right or Authority as well as Validity, to be prov'd by success. For, surely, a Ministry authoriz'd by Christ is in the general nature of it a Rightful Ministry.

But I never love to contend with any man about the use of a word. Had I been aware of that which I now take to be his sense of validity, when I wrote my Remarks, I should never have suggested that he seem'd willing to prove more than that by success in the Sermon on that subject: as indeed I never meant to suggest that he did. Nor should I have troubled my Reader with the enquiry I made whether success will prove a Ministry Valid; or, how far a Ministry may be valid, which is not duly call'd. Because, how useful soever the enquiry be in it-self, it is really not to the purpose of Mr. P.'s doctrine of proving a Ministry Valid by success; because it goes upon a notion of Validity different from his. And yet the answer, which he hath made to it, seems to oblige me to re-consider it.

I began this enquiry with saying (Rem. p. 15.) that a *Ministry is so far valid as it is effectual to those purposes, to which Christ intended the Ministry in his Church should be effectual.* In these words I laid down my notion of a Valid Ministry, and that in such a manner, as plainly to shew that I took it (as I do still) to be undoubtedly the proper notion of it. And yet Mr. P. upon reciting this (Def. p. 49.) makes no exception thereto, but on the contrary soon after slides into my use of the term (as I think I am bound to understand him) without taking the least notice of the change, or of any difference of acceptation: as if either his own notion of it were not fix'd, or at least he did not care whether our Readers understood us or not. Some instances of his using the term *Valid* in my sense with respect to a Ministry shall be particularly noted in the sequel.

Next

Next to my words last recited follow these, *And so it [a Ministry] may be valid either in all respects, or only in some. And wherein it is valid, it may be so, either (per se) in its own Right proceeding from Christ's institution of, and promise to, his Ministry, or (per accidens) accidentally, as to the said Ministry, i.e. out of such regards of the Divine Goodness, to which it hath no claim.* And this, which I take to be plain and obvious sense, Mr. P. calls a *parade of Metaphysical distinctions* (Def. p. 49.) and intimates to be ostentatious: when in truth I had no other design thereby, than to set the matter I was upon in as clear a light, as I could, and knew not how to do it, but by making the distinctions aforesaid. And I hope I may say, without being magisterial, that whoever shall set himself clearly to inform as well as persuade, or but to think exactly, will find such distinctions, as Mr. P. here ridicules, to be no unprofitable or unnecessary niceties. Nor are men wont to confound themselves and others by any thing more, than by not distinguishing in proper place.

He pretends, however, to examine how my distinctions affect our controversy in the application I make of them. In order to which he sets down the following words of mine, *Now whether a Ministry be valid, so far as it is successful to the proper purposes of a Ministry, can be no question; unless it may be doubted, whether a successful Ministry be successful. But success in one respect will not prove a Ministry valid in another, not included in that.* And then he tells the world (Def. p. 49, 50.) that *the drift of all this is, that a Ministry may by the success appear valid as to the business of preaching, but not of baptizing, and adds, that I fancy I have a brave evasion, and that here he cannot apply his argument at all, viz. as looking upon the success of baptism, in the ordinary cases of Infants especially, to be too latent for his purpose, tho' that of preaching be not.* But this is to enter into my thoughts, to reproach me with fancying what I do not say a word of; and with an evasive purpose, which doth not at all appear. And the truth is, it was neither only, nor chiefly, nor in any particular manner, my drift to overthrow, much less

less to evade, the application of his argument to prove the Validity of any Ministry to the purpose of Baptizing. Nor should I have troubled my-self at all about his Rule of success, had it tended only to prove the validity of a Ministry to that purpose, without regard to Ordination : that I am satisfied 'tis insufficient in that respect. Nor should I now take any notice of the more particular rules which he advances upon this occasion; were it not to prevent mistakes in judging of the validity of other administrations besides that of Baptism. I will use however, as much brevity as I can in the examination of them: when first I have observ'd, that Mr. P. here, in representing me as willing to own that a Ministry may by the success appear valid as to the business of Preaching, must not use *valid* for *authoriz'd by Christ*, but in my sense for *effectual to the proper purpose*; unless he would egregiously misrepresent me who never gave him occasion to think I would allow success sufficient to prove a man authoriz'd, as a Minister, to the business of Preaching.

The first of the particular Rules before refer'd to is thus stated by him (ibid.) *That success which will serve to evidence the validity of the administration of an ordinance to one person, will likewise prove the validity of the same administration [he means by the same person also, or, however by the same kind of Ministry] to another; supposing there is an equal right in both to have it administered to them.* This holds true, if the administration be suppos'd Valid to one person of right, or by virtue of the Divine promise made to Christ's Ministers; but otherwise not: because God may sometimes give a blessing, where he hath promis'd none and yet not always do it in cases which to us seem like. As for Mr. P.'s application of this his rule to the case of Baptism, tho' exceptionable in several respects, I shall make no particular reflection on it for the reason before given.

The second Rule which he lays down (ibid.) upon this occasion is, *That when a Ministry appears to be valid in a greater and more chief end of it's institution, 'tis reasonable to suppose 'tis so likewise with respect to any inferiour purposes of it.* Here the phrase of being *valid in a greater or more*

chief end is not good sense: nor can I any ways tell, whether he means *valid in a chief part of the Ministerial Office*, or, *valid to that which is the chief end of the whole Office*. My answer therefore shall be adapted to both meanings. And it is this, That God, of his great goodness towards well-meaning, tho' mistaken people, may sometimes make the Ministrations of persons unauthoriz'd valid or effectual in or to a great or chief part or end of the Ministerial Office: and yet their Ministrations in any kind will not therefore be fit to be depended upon, because not entitled to Christ's promise. Such persons likewise may appear to act validly or with effect, and yet really act without any effect but what is superficial and transitory. And 'tis very probable that God, who is wont many ways to exercise and prove his people, may often suffer usurpers of the Ministry to act with a great appearance of power and efficacy (and that particularly in Preaching) for the exercise of his people in a conformity to Rule and Order, and in an humble expectation of his blessing thereupon, notwithstanding any seeming advantages to be met with in irregular courses.

It is to be noted, that in laying down this Rule Mr. P. must use the word *Valid* in my sense, and not his own; as also when in his application of it he is pleas'd to say, that *I own their Ministry* [i. e. the Ministry of him and his brethren] *may be valid to the converting and saving sinners*, and that I deny 'tis valid as to baptism. And yet I have never expressly own'd, what he says I own, or denied, what he says I deny. Neither have I by any colour of consequence both own'd the one and denied the other, either in the same sense of validity, or in such sense as he can be suppos'd to have fix'd upon me the owning the one and denying the other. All that I have said to give Mr. P. occasion to represent me thus amounts to no more than this, That a pretended Ministry, not duly call'd, may sometimes (for ought I know) be valid i. e. effectual or successful to the converting and saving some sinners, but that the Baptisms of such a Ministry are to be look'd upon by the Church as no better than Lay-baptisms, be they va-

lid or invalid. He may at his leisure consider how this part of his conduct is consistent with the duty of veracity.

I proceed to his third Rule here given, which is (Def. p. 51.) *That that success, which evidences the valid administration of one ordinance, does likewise evidence the valid administration of another, the administration of which was previously necessary.* And this is very certain in the sense which I suppose he intended, viz. That that success which evidences one ordinance to have been validly administered to any person, doth likewise evidence that person's having had another ordinance administered to him, if so be that the one could not have been validly administered to him before the other had so been. But that the validity of the one, whether it were of right or only accidental, should prove the other to have been valid of right, there is no reason to grant; as neither, that any ordinary success will evidence a validity of right; or, that the genuine and entire effect or success of any Divine Ordinance is ordinarily observable with certainty by mortal man. Nor do I conceive that any Ordinance (v. g. the Lord's Supper) doth so necessarily require another (v. g. baptism) previously to it, but that God may as well, and as often and out of the like regards of his goodness, supply that defect in an extraordinary way, as give success to any acts of an usurping Ministry. What is most certain and most needful to be observ'd is, that we are to wait for God's blessing in the ways of his appointment, and not betake our-selves to irregular courses out of any appearance of success to be met with in them. What there is of such an appearance attending upon the Administrations of the Lord's Supper by Dissenting Ministers, I take not upon me to determine. Whatever it be, it is not fit to be trusted to by any body, without being otherwise assur'd of the grounds upon which both their Ministry and their Separation stand.

His last Rule is, (ibid.) *That as the success of a Ministry in one Administration confessedly shews it valid in that respect, so success in all Administrations shews it valid in all respects.* And here again I must suppose him to speak of the validity of a Ministry in my sense, or else grossly to misrepresent

misrepresent me. For, that success in one administration shews a Ministry valid in that respect, by my confession, as *valid* is us'd by him, to signify, *call'd and authoriz'd by Christ*, is utterly untrue. He knows I pleaded on the contrary, that a Ministry not authoriz'd by Christ may sometimes have success. Besides the word *shews* as it stands in this Rule, is neither of my using, nor, according to my sense of things, proper to be us'd: because I esteem the chief and proper success of every Gospel-Ordinance to be of so latent a nature in it-self, as not to be qualified to *shew* any thing. So that when this Rule is plainly express'd, and so as truly to stand upon my confession, it will come to no more than this, *That as a Ministry which is successful in one administration is certainly valid (i. e. effectual or successful) in that respect, so a Ministry which is successful in all administrations is valid (i. e. effectual or successful) in all respects.* This indeed will hold by my confession, and Mr. P. is welcome to the most he can make of it. But if he dislikes his Rule thus understood, as being of no use, I can only say, that he had no reason to expect any better for his purpose on the foot of my confession; especially after the fair warning I gave him (Rem. p. 15.) where I said, that *whether a Ministry be valid, so far as it is successful to the proper purposes of a Ministry, can be no question; unless it may be doubted, whether a successful Ministry be successful.* What Mr. P. meant more by this Rule I must leave him to explain; to me it looks dark.

In the same page he seems to suppose that I count *every irregularity in an Ordination sufficient to evidence a Ministry is usurped, and not duly called*: which also, I think, is what he calls my principle. Def. p. 53. But therein he mistakes me. I confess I did say (p. 17. of my Remarks) *that nothing but special revelation, or necessity, can amount to a due or sufficient Call without regular Ordination.* But thereby I meant such an Ordination as the Rule allows to be good or valid, without regard to such circumstances as are extra-essential: nor did I ever, nor is it probable I ever should, imagine, that an Ordination wanting no essentials should not be a sufficient Call to the Ministry, without

some other circumstances, that are not essential, or with any circumstances, which, however irregular, destroy not the essence of it. An Ordination regular in Essentials is, doubtless, a sufficient Call to the Ministry in general, notwithstanding any extra-essential irregularity.

And therefore I shall not need to go out of my way to vindicate the Regularity of our Ordinations in every circumstance, whether essential or not. It were endless to dwell upon every new matter that may be suggested. And for the same reason I shall not stand to discuss what Mr. P. objects (Def. p. 53.) against the management of Excommunications and Absolutions in our Church: which he brings in upon no other occasion, than my saying, what I believe himself and every body will allow, *That, as to what concerns the outward polity of the Church, a Ministry is then Valid, when the Acts of it (as v. g. it's Excommunications and Absolutions) are of right to be admitted as effectual to all the purposes of Ecclesiastical Order and Discipline, or not to be treated as void and null in those regards.* And as to what he says p. 52. *that it would seem very strange to him, if God should make an usurp'd Ministry more successful than such a one as is duly Call'd,* that has been consider'd already.

And whereas he adds *ibid. that he doth not see, how a Ministry can be thought valid to put men in a state of Salvation, without being valid in all the administrations, that are suppos'd necessary in order thereto:* that, by reason of our different notions of validity, is really an obscure, however it may seem a plain sentence. I wish he would clearly speak his mind, to these two points. 1. Whether mere Lay men, and of them such particularly as take themselves to be (though really they are not) Ministers sufficiently Call'd, and thereupon bear themselves as such, may sometimes by their Teachings and Exhortations, and other means, be instrumental to the bringing men to a true and lively faith in Christ, which includes repentance; and 2. Whether all they who have such faith, and who consequently cannot be guilty of a wilful neglect of any ritual observance requir'd, are in a state of salvation. If he answer,

answer affirmatively to both these questions (as in effect he
 plainly does to the later (Def. p. 58.) he then sees how that
 may be which I say, viz. *how a Ministry (so term'd) may*
accidentally have success upon some persons to the putting
them into a state of Salvation, and yet not be duly Call'd,
 or Valid, as of right (i. e. as entitled to Christ's promise
 made to his Ministry) in any one Administration. If,
 contrary to my expectation, he answer negatively in either
 case, he will deny indeed what I have own'd (and, with
 submission, do still) to be my opinion, but what I am
 not under any necessity of maintaining. For tho' I hope
 many Dissenters are in a state of Salvation, it appears much
 more certain to me, that the Ministry among them is not
 duly Call'd, than that any of them are put into such a state
 by the acts or performances of it made successful by the Di-
 vine concurrence. So that if it could be made appear, that
 I must in reason either deny the Dissenting Ministry any
 true success, or grant them a due Call, I should think my-
 self oblig'd to do the former. But at present I see no necessity
 of either.

To what I say, that in respect of the outward polity of
 the Church, *I conceive no Ministry to be valid, which hath*
not both a due Call to the Office, and such an one as may
call under the cognizance of the Church, he answers, or ra-
 ther repartees, that *a little more charity might help me to*
see, those he pleads for have such a Call. I might say, that
 then, sure, it will be allow'd me, that I have a good deal
 of charity already. But, to be serious, I see no reason, why
 my charity should be in the least question'd upon this oc-
 casion. What I said is a general truth, which himself doth
 not think fit to deny: not did I apply it to the case of any
 particular Ministry whatsoever. I was considering in the
 general only, what validity a Ministry, not duly Call'd,
 might or might not have. And where the uncharitableness
 of that is, I cannot imagine.

When I read and consider'd his telling us Def. p. 51. that
 he *speaks of such as have a due Call,* and that the Ministry
 he defends is not usurp'd, but duly call'd, I really took his
 meaning (tho' I thought it oddly express'd) to be, That
 he

he did not pretend success would prove a Ministry Valid whether it be or be not duly call'd; but that it would prove it Valid, as being duly call'd: a due or sufficient Call being included in his notion of a Valid Ministry. But now I am apt to think I took him wrong. Because here p. 53. he not only blames me for not seeing that those he pleads for have a due Call, and such an one, as may fall under the cognizance of the Church, but immediatly subjoyns these words, "*And where the essentials of an ordination are, I shall never attempt to invalidate it, for the sake of an irregularity in a disputable circumstance.*" One would think by this, that he did not pretend success would prove any Ministry Valid in his sense, which had not the essentials of Ordination. And yet 'tis manifest, that his arguments tend to defend every pretended Ministry, that hath success, whether it have those essentials or not: nor doth he once tell us that those essentials are to be presuppos'd in the application of his Rule of Success. He doth not once tell us that, I say, either in the Sermon it-self on that subject, or in his Apology for it in his Preface to the other. Nor could he well tell us so, since 'tis manifest his arguments have no dependence at all on such a supposition, but must either be conclusive without it, or not conclusive with it.

S E C T. XIII.

Towards the bottom of p. 53. coming to close what he hath to say in defence of what he calls the argument of his Sermon, entituled, *An Useful Ministry a Valid One*, he observes, That I own my self, that *I had not throughout particularly examin'd that Sermon.* By which what he would insinuate I do not know. But my meaning, in what I own'd, plainly was, that I had not in those my Remarks which were printed, examin'd it particularly throughout. And why might not I in that manner examine the general Doctrine of a Sermon, without doing the like by the Application of it, or any other particular therein contain'd? Especially, when it was but a by concern to the business which I had undertaken. However, I can assure him, that

had carefully perus'd and consider'd the whole Sermon, and particularly weigh'd with my-self the force of all by him said in support of the general doctrine; and not only so, but took care in my Remarks to leave no part of that unanswered, either by a direct refutation, or by overthrowing the supposition upon which only it could stand. How effectually this was done let others judge: as also, whether I have not in this my Reply sufficiently discover'd the weakness of his Defence in this regard.

But he says further (p. 53, 54.) *that I have not been able to give the least evidence, that his notions appear unsettled and confus'd, tho' (he says) I over and over reproach him therewith; which (he adds) is not fair in a man that pretends to such an exactness in his conduct.* To this I answer, first, that I pretended to no greater exactness in my conduct, than what it becomes every man, and much more every Christian to pretend to. I pretended to be careful to do my adversary no wrong: and as I my-self am sure I really was; so I do not find but my Readers are generally satisfied as to that. The same pretence I still continue, and hope that no provocations, or other temptations, shall divert me from a suitable behaviour: but I do not, nor ever did I, pretend to be secure from all involuntary slips in this or any other respect.

I answer further, that whether his notions about his Rule of success, as deliver'd in his Sermon on that subject and preface to the other, do not appear in some respects unsettled and confus'd (which, however, I never mention'd in a reproachful way, unless the bare mention be a reproach) the intelligent Reader is the proper judge. I am sure they would appear so to me, and that I was put to a good deal of trouble, which I would gladly have avoided, and should, if I could have clearly satisfied my-self, what it was that I aim'd at.

I freely confess that now I think I understand, that by a Valid Ministry he means not barely a Ministry Valid in its effects, but a Ministry Validly or sufficiently call'd, I can reconcile him better to himself as to what he would prove, in one respect, than I could before. But as to the success from

from which he argues, I cannot but think, for reasons before given, that he hath not yet settled any distinct notion of it. Nor is it yet altogether clear to me what he would prove: as to which I shall explain my self presently.

Having had occasion to mention the appearance of unsettledness and confuseness in his notions, p. 17. of my Remarks, I proceeded to give an instance thereof in these words, *The tendency of his arguments is to prove success in converting and edifying a sufficient evidence of a Call to the Ministry, and to perswade people to rest satisfied in, and to abuse, a Ministry, that appears to have such success, without troubling themselves about it's Ordination, or any other evidence of it's Call. But that this was his intention he will not own: and whether he ever will or can give a clear and distinct account of what he did mean, I cannot tell.* One would think now, that if he really had any clear and distinct settled meaning in this matter, here was provocation enough to make him declare it. And by his reciting my words aforesaid, and by the form of his answer to them, one would think that was his design. However, by the conclusion of it (*viz. And so, I hope, I have given a clear and distinct account of what I did mean*) it appears, that he would not have us expect any clearer account thereof, than what we here have. Let us see therefore, what that is.

And thus it begins Def. p. 54. *"The tendency of my argument was indeed to shew, that such success was a sufficient evidence of the validity [i. e. valid Call] of a Ministry, and I cannot see but it must be so, since 'tis an evidence of Christ's fulfilling to them the promise he made to his Ministers of being with them.* I suppose, I have explain'd *Validity* to his mind; tho' since he could not but be sensible that I took the word in another sense, and since himself also now hath us'd it sometimes in my sense, and that as spoken of a Ministry, I wish for the Reader's fuller satisfaction he had not us'd it here, without an explication of his own. And since in the words to which he makes the reply, I had express'd what I now conceive he styles *Validity* by a *Call*, why doth he change my clearer expression for a more ambiguous one? It could hardly be done but by accident.

accident, and the design, I am sure, could not be perspicuity.

But supposing he had never so plainly acknowledg'd, that the tendency of his arguments was to shew that success in converting and edifying is a sufficient evidence of a Call to the Ministry; why doth he not speak to that further tendency wherewith I charge them in this place, viz. *a tendency to persuade people to rest satisfied in, and to chuse, a Ministry that appears to have such success, without troubling themselves about it's Ordination, or any other evidence of it's Call?* Some, perhaps, may think that this latter tendency is in effect so plainly contain'd in the former, that it was for that reason not needful to be own'd distinctly by it-self. But for all that, it would have been more clear and open procedure, if he had so own'd or denied it: and till he had more fully explains himself in this particular, I dare not say positively how he would be understood. Something more was the matter, that he would neither deny nor grant them expressly what was put so home to him. If his intention was to persuade people to what I charg'd his arguments as tending to persuade them, why will he so fully make good what I said, that he would not own it? And if that really was not his design, why will he not say it was not, and shew us withal how the tendency of his arguments is to be moderated in that respect?

As to the particular argument (from the fulfilling of the promise) which he here suggests, that hath been consider'd already, and is defective in two respects. 1. In that it supposeth, that when any pretended Ministers have success, it must be in the way of fulfilling to them, the promise made by Christ to his Ministers, i. e. it must be in virtue of their right to the said promise. 2. In that it supposes the success promis'd to the Ministry to be a thing of such a nature, as to be producible by way of evidence to mortal men, with a sufficient degree of certainty. Of both which things (which he knew I denied) enough hath been said already. My business at present is not to examine his arguments, but to understand clearly, if it may be, what it is he argues for and drives at. Towards which I am very little help'd by what follows,

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" *My design further (saith he) in not mentioning a regular Ordination was, to prevent people's laying a greater stress upon it, than it will bear.* But he needed not to give any account, why he did not mention what he calls a *regular Ordination*, i. e. an Ordination regular in all circumstances, whether essential or not. The question is, why he did not mention Ordination at all, when he was teaching people to judge of the pretensions of Ministries; not so much as allowing it the least place among the various other circumstances, which he recounts; whereby the evidence from success may be much strengthen'd: as if no stress at all were to be laid upon the very essentials of Ordination. For my part, I should not in the least doubt, but that his design was to persuade people to chuse, or rest satisfied in, a Ministry that appears to be successful, without troubling themselves about it's Ordination, whether it had any or none: were it not that, besides that he will not be provoked to own this design, he doth several times (to my apprehension) suggest that he had it not; especially p. 42. and 53. of this his Defence, in words which have been quoted and consider'd already.

And the same thing seems to be insinuated in the words last recited from him, together with the following, which are these, "*I am heartily for imposition of hands, but do not think I ought therefore to question the validity of the Ministry of those, who have every thing else that can be required in a Minister. And therefore, as I don't my-self, so neither would I have others, scruple the receiving and joyning with such Ministers, upon the account of that circumstance which I acknowledge an irregularity.*" This, I say, looks as if he would not be thought to persuade people to chuse a Ministry without any regard to Ordination, but only not to reject any one on the account of an irregularity in a circumstance, which he doth not count essential to it.

" *And so (continues he) the whole tendency of my argument was to promote charity, and I don't wonder it therefore was displeasing to some men. Let this Author now try, if he can find any thing in either of the two Sermons that doth not well agree with this design. And so I hope*

" *have*

"have given a clear and distinct account of what I did mean. By his argument I judge he means the doctrine of trying Ministries by success, as by him deliver'd and supported. And how it can be truly said, that the whole tendency of that is to promote charity, I cannot imagine: unless to lead people into a disregard of the whole business of Ordination, and to put them upon judging one another in order to judge of their respective Ministries, be promoting charity. And if you take the whole Sermon together on this subject, both Doctrine and Application (all which he may, possibly, mean by *his argument*) the tendency of it is as much to promote charity between Episcoparians and Dissenters (the charity which he pretends to have design'd Def. p. 19, 20.) as for a Plaintiff to represent the Defendant as a notorious Villain in comparison to him, and to make that a sure argument of his having the Right of the Cause, is the way to procure amity between them.

Mr. P. indeed would be thought now to have had the case of such, as he supposes Ordain'd without imposition of hands particularly in his charitable view. But of that appears no footstep in the Sermon it-self: nor is there any thing more manifest in it than a design to establish the honour of the associated Dissenting Ministry in general upon the disgrace of that which is Episcopal among us. As is visible almost throughout the whole Application from p. 23. of the Sermon to p. 38. inclusive. The tendency of which to promote charity I have noted before. I know not whether he takes me to be one of those, who are likely to be displeas'd with a thing on account of it's charitable tendency: but this I am sure of, that I am chiefly displeas'd with that Sermon on account of it's tendency to promote animosities and confusion, and what else looks uncharitable in it.

And now I hope the Reader will agree with me, that Mr. P. hath not here given a clear and distinct account of what he did mean; but that he hath rather industriously avoided it; by refusing to declare himself upon what was put home to him; by insinuating that he would not have success depended upon without the essentials of Ordination, and

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and yet not speaking that out, nor helping us to reconcile it with the pretended sufficiency of his way of success; and by offering to make us believe, that his only, or main design was to promote charity, when his management was utterly irreconcilable therewith.

And upon the whole matter, as to the meaning of his doctrine of trying Ministries by success, there remain still these doubts with me.

1. I am not clearly satisfied what he means by *success* in this case; whether it be *the forming Christ in men*, as by me explain'd, or something of a lower nature, as namely *the bringing the outward conversation to a Christian-like form*. And when the general nature of this success is sufficiently clear'd and settled, it will be needful to determine more clearly what measure or condition of it is requisite to the purpose in hand.

2. I am not satisfied what, or whether any, regard to Ordination is to be sav'd, when there is that appearance of Success, which his Rule requires, be that what it will.

How darkly and inconsistently he talks in both these respects, I have already shewn. And these are considerable difficulties, that need to be unfolded, for the clear understanding of what he did mean.

My main concern is, that people be not taught or induc'd to believe, that any appearance of success (not miraculous) is sufficient to justify, or direct the choice of, a Ministry, which doth not appear to have the essentials of Ordination, or which acts in opposition to the peace and order of the Church of Christ. If Mr. P. will be pleas'd not only to declare, that it was not his design to teach, or induce people to believe, any such thing, but also to shew how the tendency of his arguments that way may be avoided, I shall be satisfied, and think our dispute on this subject happily ended. In the mean time I thought it needful to shew the weakness of those arguments, which appear to have so ill a tendency; and hope now, at least, to have done it with competent evidence.